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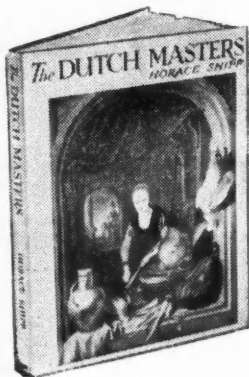
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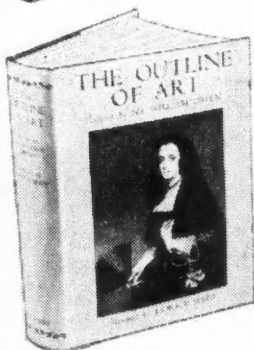


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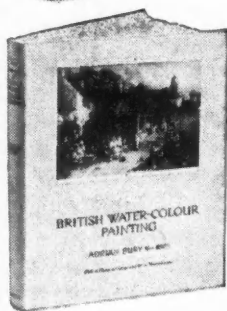
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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

UTILITARIANISM: A SYSTEM OF POLITICAL TOLERANCE

SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN

UTILITARIANISM, and particularly Bentham's version of it, has become a favourite scapegoat during the past century. It has been blamed for the rationalism, hedonism, secularism and amorality of our times, and for all contemporary misfortunes, from economic depression to moral depravity. But, although subjected to a remarkable variety of criticism, Bentham's utilitarianism has not been interpreted as a subtle, though unsuccessful, attempt to solve a difficult and enduring political problem: How to prevent men from tormenting their fellows in the attempt to do them good?

The many different interpretations of utilitarianism are made plausible by the curious character of its basic rule. The principle of utility has the form of an ethical principle, but, as defined by Bentham, it altogether lacks any conventional ethical content. According to Bentham, it is 'that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question'.¹ In Bentham's language, happiness is the sum of pleasures, and so the principle of utility may be summarized as an injunction to maximize pleasure. But this does not give it any positive ethical meaning.

The most superficial view of utilitarianism is that it counsels a life of pure sensuality. This notion has been corrected recently and conclusively by Professor Viner, who has pointed out once again that Bentham used pleasure and happiness as 'widely inclusive terms, involving not only the pleasures of the sense but also those of the heart and the mind'. Moreover, as Viner shows, although Bentham stressed the selfish sentiments, a broader view of human aspirations is not logically incompatible with utilitarianism.² In short, the principle of utility is so far from being an ethical principle that it is not even outright hedonism.

But this clarification only raises a more difficult and important question: If the principle of utility really has no ethical content, why did Bentham give it the form and status of an ethical principle? Some commentators have simply dismissed the problem by answering that

¹ JEREMY BENTHAM, *Works* (11 vols.), ed. Bowring (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838-43), I, 1.

² JACOB VINER, 'Bentham and J. S. Mill', *The American Economic Review*, XXXIX (March 1949), 366.

Bentham was not clever enough to see the difficulty in his position. Others have explained, as did John Stuart Mill, that Bentham was not moral enough to recognize the emptiness of utilitarian ethics, and that he really considered 'pushpin as good as poetry' and circumspect self-interest the ideal of life. Still others have accepted the more charitable view of A. V. Dicey, who said that the principle of utility is incomplete, but that it is 'far more easily applicable to law than to morals'.¹ This is the interpretation most generally accepted. It has been extended and sharpened by Viner, who holds that the moral paraphernalia of utility was just an oversight, because Bentham was concerned 'not with the ethics of the ordinary man, not with private morals', but 'with the ethics which should be followed by moral leaders'. Viner's thesis is that: 'As Bentham acknowledged, he sometimes overlooked this, and wrote as if what he had to say was directed at private morals, and critics have made much of this oversight without treating it merely as a lapse from his fundamental purposes.'²

But Professor Viner has too lightly dismissed Bentham's remarks on the ethical importance of the utility principle. He has not adequately accounted for statements such as: 'Those who, for the sake of peace, seeking to distinguish politics and morals, assign utility as the principle of the first, and justice of the second, only exhibit the confusion of their ideas. The whole difference between politics and morals is this: the one directs the operations of governments, the other directs the proceedings of individuals; their common object is happiness. That which is politically good cannot be morally bad; unless the rules of arithmetic, which are true for great numbers, are false as respects those which are small.'³ When Bentham first defines the principle of utility he says explicitly that it applies to 'every action whatsoever; and therefore not only of every action of a private individual but of every measure of government',⁴ implying that, if anything, there may be some doubt about whether it applies to politics. Moreover, since Bentham constantly couples morals and legislation as the concerns of utilitarianism, it is at least important to explain why he should have 'slipped' so often.

Past interpretations have either followed literally Bentham's description of utility as an ethical principle, or else set it aside as unimportant. But there is a third possibility which yields quite different conclusions about the nature of Bentham's utilitarianism — it is that even if Bentham was more interested in instructing legislators than ordinary men, his insistence that utility is a principle of morals as well as of politics was essential to his purpose. An interpretation

¹ A. V. DICEY, *Law and Opinion in England* (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 136.

² VINER, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-5.

³ BENTHAM, *Works*, I, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 1.

from this standpoint neither elevates the principle of utility to a substantive moral principle nor reduces it to a mere rule of legal reform, but examines what function its misleading appearance may have served in Bentham's system.

The true moral foundation of Bentham's system is not stated in the principle of utility, but is to be found in his objections to conventional ethical systems. He argues that principles other than utility 'consist all of them in so many contrivances for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing upon the reader to accept of the author's sentiment or opinion as a reason, and that a sufficient one, for itself'.¹ Though the first part of this statement has been remarked and emphasized by critics, the second part has generally been overlooked. Yet the most important part of Bentham's argument against moral principles is not that they are false, but that they impose one man's judgment on another. Anyone who maintains a moral principle should ask himself, Bentham suggests, whether it is not 'a kind of phrase which at bottom expresses neither more nor less than the mere averment of his unfounded sentiments; that is, what in another person he might be apt to call caprice? . . . whether his sentiment is to be a standard of right and wrong, with respect to every other man, or whether every man's sentiment has the same privilege of being a standard to itself? . . . whether his principle is not despotic and hostile to all the rest of the human race?'² Bentham sums up his opinion of all who would advocate some principle other than utility when he pronounces 'the fairest and openest of them all' that sort of man 'who speaks out, and says, "I am of the number of the Elect . . . If therefore a man wants to know what is right and what is wrong, he has nothing to do but come to me"'.³ In these statements, Bentham is objecting to the wilfulness and not just the faulty logic of conventional moral beliefs.

That no man should be allowed to impose his judgment on another is a recurring theme in Bentham's work. One cannot read far without finding some statement such as: 'Every man of ripe age and sound mind ought on this subject [what is pleasure and what is pain] be left to judge and act for himself — an attempt to give a direction to his conduct inconsistent with his view of his own interest, is no better than folly and impertinence.'⁴ 'It is absurd to reason as to the happiness of men, otherwise than with a reference to their own desires and feelings.'⁵

Moreover, one finds scattered through Bentham's writings a number of arguments supporting his objection to letting one man judge for another. One of the most emphatic of them maintains that

¹ Ibid., I, 8.

² Ibid., I, 3.

³ Ibid., I, 9, n. 9.

⁴ *Deontology*, ed. Bowring (Edinburgh, 1834), p. 29.

⁵ *Works*, I, 344.

to deny a normal adult the right to determine his own life is to treat him as a child, to derogate from his dignity as a rational being, to subject him to despotism. As Bentham put it: 'Everyone will constitute himself judge of his own utility; this is and this ought to be, otherwise man would not be a reasonable being. He who is not a judge of what is suitable for himself is less than an infant, is a fool.'¹ When discussing the relationship between guardian and ward he says: 'Pupillage being a state of dependence is an evil which ought to cease as soon as it is possible, without occasioning a greater evil.'² In opposing excessive control by the state Bentham wrote that legislators who do not trust to the prudence of individuals treat men like 'children or slaves'. Bentham called such excessive legal control 'paternal or maternal care'³ and declared it justified only in infancy or insanity.

Elsewhere, Bentham underscores the difficulty of understanding other men sufficiently well to know what is in their interests. Despite the caricature of his personality by Hazlitt, Mill and others, Bentham's work shows more than ordinary sensitivity to the differences among human beings. His list of 'circumstances influencing sensibility' is a remarkably comprehensive guide to human idiosyncracies. In each case, Bentham insisted, one must examine as many circumstances as possible because 'In the same mind such and such causes of pain or pleasure will produce more pain or pleasure than such or such other causes of pain or pleasure: and this proportion will in different minds be different.'⁴ To list all the circumstances influencing sensibility would 'be a work of great labour as well as nicety: history and biography would need to be ransacked: a vast course of reading would need to be travelled through' and therefore 'as on so many other occasions', Bentham explained, he would have to confine himself to 'dry and general instruction'.⁵

Bentham's discussions of the penal law, similarly, are sermons against the error of assuming that all men perform any given action for the same reasons. He deplores findings of guilt deduced from evidence about motives⁶ because no motive necessarily operates in the same way on every occasion. Motives commonly considered bad may lead to good consequences, depending on the particular conditions and people involved.⁷ Even 'dispositions', which are more likely to be consistent, ultimately can only be a matter of presumption, since what may turn out to be a mischievous act may not have appeared so to the actor, and an act with good consequences may be mistakenly performed by a man of bad disposition. Intimate association with another may train one to judge his capacities and requirements, but in Bentham's view it is always dangerous to separate the 'seat of judgment' from the 'seat of desire', and so if

¹ *Ibid.*, I, 12.² *Ibid.*, I, 348.³ *Ibid.*, III, 5.⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 21.⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 22.⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 60-1.⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 214ff.

each man were to rely on the judgment of another, the result would be, 'as has with less truth been said of the blind leading the blind', that all would 'be continually falling into the ditch'.¹

That Bentham wished each man to judge for himself seems fairly obvious. It is equally clear that the principle of utility, which requires only that each man do what he most wants to do, does not impose any man's positive judgment on another. Even when the utility principle is applied to social relations and becomes the principle of greatest happiness, it is still a principle of tolerance rather than benevolence; it does not require or entitle any man to decide what is good for another. It says only that every man should forbear from interfering with the activities of others, with their pursuit of whatever they find desirable. To promote the greatest happiness is to promote the happiness of others as they themselves understand it. The principle of utility thus makes only one positive prescription: Let each man, as far as it is possible in a community of men, choose for himself.

The principle of utility does not conflict with Bentham's conviction that men should desist from imposing their judgments on one another, but this is not a sufficient explanation of his enthusiasm for it. Bentham might simply have said, as other British liberals did, that tolerance of diverse ways of life is essential to a good community. Why, instead of stating his case for tolerance openly and firmly, did he talk around it, and encumber it with endless discussions of utilitarianism? If there is a reasonable explanation, it must be that Bentham considered the principle of utility with all its accoutrements a better way of serving the cause of tolerance than a bald and direct endorsement.

Two motives, according to Bentham, incline men to desert tolerance for despotism: self-interest and benevolence. Critics who are impressed by Bentham's extended analysis of self-interest often say that he had absolutely ignored the possibility of benevolence. In fact, however, Bentham not only clearly recognized but feared the predilection to do good to others; indeed nothing so enraged him as the philanthropic fanatic who, inspired only by kindness, produces only misery. Bentham was inclined to consider even hypocrites less harmful than sincere do-gooders: 'If the benevolence be but in their mouths, it is bad: if it be in their hearts, it is worse, still worse.' There is hope, he thought, for release from the hypocrite who being moved by some specific interest may end his 'persecution' once that interest ceases; 'by force, by superior benefit from a contrary course, he may be led to give it up at any time'.² But the really well-meaning benefactor cannot be turned away; his zeal makes his persecution endless: 'With intentions very commonly of the purest kind, a man becomes a

¹ Ibid., IX, 6.

² Ibid., IX, 57.

torment either to himself or his fellow creatures.'¹ Foremost among such persecutors, Bentham counted religious fanatics, whom he abhorred but did not accuse of ill intentions, though he could not refrain from describing their ultimate motives as 'fear of infinitely intense and lasting torment or hope of infinitely intense and lasting happiness'.² The danger of moral systems that make positive commands, even when they are advocated in a spirit of genuine benevolence, lies in 'their serving as a cloke, and pretence, an element, to despotism: if not a despotism in practice, a despotism however in disposition: which is but too apt, when pretence and power offer, to show itself in practice'.³

But moral systems can serve so aptly as 'a cloke to despotism' because men are disposed to be benevolent or to attribute benevolent motives to others. If no one admitted the justice of 'doing good', despotism under the guise of morality would be impossible. There might still be despots, but they would be more readily recognized for what they were — tyrants using others to promote their own self-interest. As long, however, as men pride themselves on their benevolence, as long as they admire others for doing good, the clever tyrant, and even the sincere philanthropist, can more easily cause unlimited misery without arousing suspicion.

Some reasonable men are aware of this danger, and distrust all benevolence, if not the motive, at least its effects. If he had addressed only them, Bentham might well have confined himself to reiterating the value of tolerance. But in the world as it is, few men recognize that benevolence is a source of despotism, and not many more can be brought to understand it simply by being told. Their own good impulses will incline them to respect the appearance of good in others. Bentham was a reformer, but he wanted to find some more immediate remedy for despotism than a fundamental change in human nature. He was not a man to assume that all will be well if men are only given the proper instructions. And so, hating despotism, loving tolerance, understanding the tendency of men to move from convictions about the good life to actions which compel all other men to conform to those convictions, Bentham needed some way of protecting men — as they are here and now — against the temptation to rule over others.

Though there is no logical inconsistency between the ideas that there is an objective morality and that this morality should never be forced on men, there is a psychological tension between them. Very few men can, like Lord Acton, at once hold firm moral convictions and desist from constraining others to accept them — and this difficulty affects even those who have some abstract respect for tolerance. If ordinary men become over-zealous missionaries as soon

¹ *Ibid.*, I, 9, n. 9.

² *Ibid.*, IX, 57.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 9, n. 9.

as they think they know what is good, then they can be kept from exercising or endorsing the despotism of benevolence only by teaching them an amoral tolerance. This, in any case, was Bentham's solution to the problem.

The principle of utility is an excellent device for creating such amoral tolerance. It gives men a moral formula to which they can attach themselves without giving them any substantive commands that they might impose on others. It says that men who follow certain prescriptions will live better and be kinder to their neighbours than those who do not. Yet, if followed exactly, it leads to tolerance rather than benevolence, for it defines happiness as the fulfilment of whatever private desires a man has. It commits men only to avoid interfering with others in the pursuit of happiness as they themselves understand it, to avoid using them to serve another's self-interest, and to refrain from imposing on them someone else's conception of what they ought to desire. Teaching the principle of utility to beneficent men is a psychological trick — it is like filling a drunkard's hip-flask with water in order to hoodwink him into sobriety.

This sort of device is quite common in Bentham's work, which everywhere shows his recognition of the psychological dangers that attend otherwise reasonable and valid convictions. What are often regarded as Bentham's philosophical quirks can be consistently explained as attempts to overcome those dangers. His apparent self-contradictions, his cumbersome redefinitions of commonplace terms, his contentiousness — all are parts of this attempt.

Bentham's inconsistencies are notorious. Although he attacked 'natural law' and 'declarations of rights', he insisted on a set of absolute standards of government action and securities against misrule. He declared that constitutional limitations on the power of the legislature are either ridiculous or vicious, but nevertheless devoted a long work — which he absentmindedly named a *Constitutional Code* — to outlining the proper functions, procedures and makeup of legislatures. When attacking Blackstone, he was a Radical and a rationalist, intemperately denouncing all respect for the past and all mention of the 'matchless constitution'; but he directed against the French Revolution just those classic arguments against rationalism and radicalism which have since been aimed at him. He devoted years to the study of legal fictions, and he redefined commonly used words until his writing became unreadable; but all his 'individualist' definitions did not keep him from talking about the 'greatest happiness' and from having the same regard for it that some of his critics have had for what they call the 'common good'. None of these outbursts of incongruity seems so strange, however, if one recognizes that Bentham set out not to destroy established beliefs and conventional terminology, but to neutralize their misuse. Ideas

and words that are in themselves unobjectionable may be corrupted. What is otherwise high-minded and judicious conservatism may become, as it did in Bentham's time, a disguise for entrenched injustice; and if the appeal to natural rights sometimes reflects high ethical convictions, it may also be used to divert attention from immediate suffering to abstract and distant goals. Bentham tried to purify ordinary words and beliefs of such vulnerable ambiguities. He preferred to speak of 'securities against misrule' because 'When, instead of the word "securities" and "misrule", you employ such a word as "right", a cloud, and that of a black hue, overshadows the whole field.'¹ But 'securities against misrule' served much the same function in Bentham's theory as 'natural rights' do elsewhere: 'If no demand for security against misrule can have place, until and except in so far as some law is violated, no such security can possibly be obtained in the case in which it is most needed.'² He deplored constitutional prohibitions as means by which past generations could impose their will on the future, but he insisted that a proper legal code must begin with a general law of liberty — 'a law which should restrain delegated powers, and limit their exercise to certain particular occasions, for certain specific causes'.³

Similarly, he objected to such words as 'community' and 'public interest' because they are like a legal fiction, 'a wilful falsehood having for its object the stealing legislative power, by and for hands which could not or durst not, openly claim it — and but for the delusion thus produced, could not exercise it'.⁴ The word 'community', he explained, is easily endowed with mysteries that help mislead the untutored and encourage even the best-willed of men to forget the realities to which it refers. 'The people', he pointed out, is merely an 'indefinite number of members of the same community.' 'Public interest', he wrote, 'only represents the aggregate of individual interests,' and if this were remembered, it would become evident that 'to sacrifice "individual interests" to "public interest"' is either a tautology or, more probably, a disguised way of justifying the sacrifice of some individual interests to others. A government acting in the name of 'public interest' is really giving 'a question in itself simple, an air of profundity and political mystery';⁵ and frightening timid citizens — who dare not question policies dictated by an uncomprehended public interest — from advocating their private desires. Let his precise terminology replace the popular fictions, Bentham felt, and the interests of living individuals could not so conveniently be ignored, or tyranny so well camouflaged. That there might be other equally pernicious drawbacks to his terminology Bentham had not the time to discover.

¹ *Ibid.*, VIII, 557.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 243.

² *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 321.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 576.

Like his finicky precision about words, Bentham's insistence that the principle of utility must be the foundation of ethics and politics expressed his persistent sensitivity to the political consequences of certain psychological tendencies. His reasoning on why utility must be both an ethical and political principle can be restated as follows: Governments pretend to rule for the happiness of the governed. Governors abuse their power by defining the happiness of the governed so as to include what they find most beneficial to themselves. The abuse is not recognized as such because most men are inclined to believe that everyone should be his brother's keeper, and accordingly that the rulers are properly the 'keepers' of the ruled. If a government is allowed to judge what happiness *should* mean to the ruled, its policies are practically unassailable, since it can always retort that the objector does not properly understand what is 'good'. But if happiness is defined, for each man, as whatever he desires, then a government committed to promote the happiness of the governed can justify only policies that accord with the wishes of the governed. The citizens will in these circumstances be able to object clearly and forcefully when the government is not heeding their wishes. In any case, the government will not be able to excuse favouritism and discrimination by asserting that it accords with a 'true' view of happiness. The principle of utility, by denying that any one man's view of happiness can be treated as superior to another's, eliminates an effective implement of misrule.

Regarded from this standpoint, Bentham was indeed closer to a political reformer than to a moral philosopher. He was not instructing men in the good life or inspiring them to perfection. He did not dream of leading them towards a great ideal, but set himself the modest task of providing against the worst despotism that might be produced by ordinary men moved by the usual proportion of virtue and vice. He was not himself indifferent towards high ideals, but wary of the dangers implicit in 'idealism'. He was not a pessimist, but he thought it prudent not to forfeit the good by gambling for the best. He did not doubt that there are noble men, but he did not think that political reasoning should assume that such men existed: 'admitting, as perhaps it may be admitted, that in a highly matured state of society, in here and there a highly cultivated and expanded mind, under the stimulus of some extraordinary excitement, a sacrifice of self-regarding interest to social interest, upon a national scale, has not been without example — public virtue in this shape cannot reasonably be regarded as being so frequently exemplified as insanity'.¹ Even if the probability of evil 'were ever so faint', Bentham says, 'still ought the obstacles in question to be opposed to it, considering that by their being opposed to it, evil may be excluded, while

¹ Ibid., IX, 61.

... from their being so opposed, in no shape can evil, public or private, be introduced'.¹ Bentham's guiding principle was that to trust to the benevolence of men with power is to take great and unnecessary risks, to assume that men with power are malevolent is not altogether accurate, but much safer. Utilitarianism, even if followed scrupulously, will not improve men or establish an ideal state, but it might prevent some forms of tyranny. And that is what Bentham hoped to accomplish.

But if Bentham's utilitarianism is not a moral philosophy, neither is it merely a proposal for reform. Like much of British political writing, it is a theory of the practicable — more mundane than the ideal, and more general than the practical. Bentham did not mean to prescribe either the specific laws that should govern any society or the ultimate ends that should inspire men's lives; he intended rather to teach men how to think about laws in order that they might avoid the greatest perils of political life. 'Were I to chose to what I would (most truly and readily) attribute these magnificent prerogatives of universality and immutability, it should rather be to certain grounds of law, than to the laws themselves: to the principles upon which they should be founded: to the subordinate reasons deducible from those principles and to the best plan upon which they can be put together: to the considerations by which it is expedient the legislator should suffer himself to be governed, rather than to any laws which it is expedient he should make for the government of those who stand committed to his care.'²

Unfortunately, Bentham did not make it quite clear that law and politics have distinct bases. His achievement, indeed, lay in attempting to separate the grounds of law from the principles of politics, to show that the principles by which we judge what is good and bad in politics are not sufficient as grounds for making laws. For the principles by which we should make laws must include, besides our notions of what is good and bad or right and wrong, our notions of what is expedient, of how men are likely to act under certain circumstances, and of how tyranny is to be avoided.

Ordinarily, a community's political principles are combined with its judgments of political expediency in its traditional political procedures. Those who insist that political tradition should be respected are really saying that men must know more than political principles can tell them, that men's ideals, however correct, must be supplemented by the practical wisdom of all those men in the past who have tried to apply those ideals in practice and have learned what is expedient, possible, safe. Bentham recognized the importance of translating political ideals into practicable rules but he did not accept the traditional ways of making the translation. As a conservative

¹ *Ibid.*, IX, 193.

² *Ibid.*, I, 193.

reformer, he faced a problem which cannot disturb either the absolute conservative who simply accepts the traditional as the best or the rationalist radical who sees only ideals and does not recognize the difficulty of applying them to particular circumstances. Bentham sought some standards other than tradition for judging the practicable good in politics and he found it in utilitarianism. But because he did not clearly distinguish his theory from political philosophy — which sets out the ideally best — and from particular reform proposals — which recommend what is better here and now — Bentham's work has repeatedly been assigned to the one category or the other, and he has been dismissed either as a shallow philosopher or an outdated reformer.

That Bentham should not have assessed his own work clearly is in keeping with his interests and character. He dreamt always of being Newton to the social sciences, and he thought of utilitarianism as the social equivalent of Newton's laws — a single formula that would explain all. He was by temperament a nominalist; he was entranced by the apparent exactness of the utility principle; and he was not given to philosophical introspection. He did not really mind how his system related to the usual scope of moral philosophy, if only he could do away with some defects of traditional ethics. And his personal circumstances did not force him to reflect on the ethical implications of utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill was right in saying that Bentham could not have thought as he did if he had led a less placid and complacent life. But Mill did not see that Bentham's failure to treat certain problems resulted from assurance rather than indifference, from such assurance as is given to those only who have never heard their basic notions of right and wrong seriously challenged, who have learned their ethics not in the classroom but in the nursery. By Mill's time, the values that Bentham had taken for granted were no longer automatically accepted, especially not by educated and thoughtful young men. Mill, and his contemporaries, debated not only politics, but the very foundations of morality and civilization — and they subjected utilitarianism to a kind of examination that Bentham had never foreseen. For Bentham, however, it was no problem to say, on the one hand, that malice is a 'wretched pleasure',¹ or that the philanthropist John Howard made the 'truly Christian choice' and 'died a martyr after living our apostle',² and to insist, on the other hand, that all motives should be given neutral names, and that Christian values are a vicious dogma. Since Bentham never doubted the general validity of the conventional ethics of his time, he felt no qualms about attacking certain of its particular applications in politics; in any case, he saw no need to defend it. He was concerned mainly to protect society against

¹ *Ibid.*, I, 49, n.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 121.

those who perverted this ethics and used their false doctrines as a stepping-stone to power.

In assessing Bentham's work, it must be remembered also that — unlike both earlier and later philosophers — he did not regard the state as synonymous with society. Although he denied the state any right to enforce virtue, that does not mean he denied society any role in helping individuals to live well. He did not assume that all of men's social wants must be satisfied by the state; he recognized that men can rely on non-political institutions, on the family, the school, the church (preferably un-established) for goods other than the narrowly political. He regarded the political community as only a part of society, admittedly the most necessary and powerful single part, but by no means the whole. Government, he insisted, must follow the rule of neutrality towards all ways of life, except in so far as men interfere with each other; it is not the function of the state to make men lead the best possible life. 'The principal business of the laws, the only business which is evidently and incontestibly necessary, is the preventing of individuals from pursuing their own happiness, by the destruction of a greater portion of the happiness of others. To impose restraints upon the individual for his own welfare, is the business of education; the duty of the old towards the young; of the keeper towards the madman: it is rarely the duty of the legislator towards the people.'¹ Bentham's utilitarianism therefore says nothing against those men who want to live like pigs, because it was intended to point out not the road to perfection, but the bulwarks against despotism.

Yet, in the end, Bentham's utilitarianism was misused. Though designed as a protection against utopianism, it was itself, like all foolproof remedies, a utopian attempt. It satisfied all of Bentham's requirements: It looked like an ethical guide, but it sanctioned no interference with each man's right to live as he chose. It enabled Bentham, in his proposals for legislative reform, to express his regard for tolerance, without deserting the empiricist form he cherished. But it was a trick whose success depended on a stable system of values and an unselfconscious audience. If the trick had been quite successful, Bentham's audience would have accepted utility as the ethical framework of politics while observing in their personal lives the traditional and substantive code of morality; they would have been tolerant towards others and strict with themselves. But Bentham pressed the trick too far. He succeeded in convincing men that utility was the basis not only of politics but of ethics as well. He could not hide the ethical emptiness of the utility principle, and he did not offer any clear indication of why that emptiness was important, that is, of the concern for tolerance that lay behind it.

¹ Ibid., I, 163.

In the end, he succeeded neither in seducing the unselfconscious nor convincing the sophisticated. Instead, from James Mill, a real rationalist who expected to teach morals by rote, to the Fabians, who regarded Bentham's theory as a cold-hearted defence of selfishness, utilitarianism has been as much turned to alien purposes as any other creed. By the end of the century, it was being used to justify and camouflage just that paternalism which Bentham had worked to destroy.

Even a society committed to utilitarianism might conceivably accept paternalistic government. Since utilitarianism requires that the government do what the governed wish, if the governed should wish in spite of all warnings to have their lives guided by others, a strictly utilitarian government would be obliged to become paternal. Bentham's utilitarianism at best offers protection against rulers who ignore their subject's wishes; it can never protect the ruled against their own stupid desires. Free of all substantive morality, it lacks also a clear positive argument for liberty.¹ Nevertheless, it was not in this way that British Socialism took over the banner of utilitarianism. By the time the Fabians claimed that they were the true heirs of utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill had already destroyed its ethical neutrality, and converted it into a system which could, like conventional moral codes, justify coercing others 'for their own good'. Mill had done this in order to acquit utilitarianism of the charge of ethical vacuity: he had not appreciated Bentham's purposes in leaving it ethically empty. Bentham, unfortunately, had too well concealed his main interest, tolerance. By recasting ethics in the effort to strengthen his practicable political theory, he had overreached himself. He left open the way to a perversion of his political intentions.

¹ Bentham does insist that the benefits of any law must always be balanced by the 'evil of coercion or restraint'. He also gives a well-developed argument against extensive government interference in economic affairs and even with civil liberty. But he does not set any absolute limits on government control, and above all gives nothing more than hints of a positive argument for liberty. He provides poor material for those who would persuade an audience to prefer the rigours of liberty to the ease of paternalism.

HISTORY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

R. G. BURY

How far can we ascribe any real significance to history? Is there such a thing as a philosophy of history which carries conviction? Are there any conclusions rationally deducible from history which are of importance for the guidance of mankind, or are we compelled by reflexion on the evidence to regard history as an idle tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing? These are the sort of problems which have been exercising the minds of thoughtful historians during recent years.

Not that these problems are in any way new: the puzzling character of history has long been recognized, as for instance by Amiel when he wrote: 'At first sight history seems to us accident and confusion; looked at for the second time, it seems to us logical and necessary; looked at for the third time, it appears to us as a mixture of necessity and liberty; on the fourth examination we scarcely know what to think of it, for if force is the source of right and chance the origin of force, we come back to our first explanation, only with a heavier heart than we began.' This sentence shows us very clearly how difficult it has been found by many thoughtful men to make satisfactory sense of history. It may help towards an understanding of the difficulty if we begin by surveying some of the interpretations of history which have been put forward in bygone times by Hellenic and Hebraic writers.

In Homer history is seen as little more than the playground of a number of contentious deities supervised by the supreme God Zeus who, however, can be outwitted; and, as Collingwood has put it, 'the work of Homer is not research, it is legend. The gods appear in Homer as intervening in human affairs in a way not very different from that in the theocratic histories of the Near East'.

Theognis (c. 550 B.C.) also looks at history from a theocratic point of view, and in one notable passage he (like Job) challenges this justice of Zeus, the Lord of History: 'I marvel at thee, O Zeus, who reignest over all; honour is thine and might, and thou knowest the very heart of man. How then canst thou regard with equal favour the good man and the sinner? How is it that the wicked flourish while just men lie helpless and in poverty?' Theognis prays, too, that the guilty man may himself bear the penalty of his sin and that the sins of the fathers may not be visited on the children. He was worried by 'the problem of evil'.

So, too, was Herodotus, 'the father of history', for whom Col-

lingwood has claimed the creation of 'scientific history'. His history, also, is theocratic: Fate and Providence ordain the course of human affairs: the vicissitudes of fortune for men and nations are ascribed to *Nemesis* or *Phthonos* — the envy or jealousy of the gods. In these supernatural motive-forces the historian thought he had discovered the *causes* which he sought. In the age in which he lived — as in ours — the problem of evil pressed for an answer. To quote Professor Butcher: 'Already to a Greek of fifth century B.C. the law of moral retribution was written legibly on the page of the past. Events had unfolded themselves with startling rapidity. In a single century (620-520 B.C.) five great empires — Assyria, Media, Babylonia, Lydia, Egypt — had passed away with every circumstance of dramatic impressiveness; a still shorter period had witnessed the rise and fall of the Tyrannies in Greece . . . Greek history was a living witness to the deeper laws which govern human action . . . Dramatic surprises and a Divine Irony in the ordering of events — these were the great ideas common to Herodotus and the tragedians. In all alike great disasters are seen to follow close upon insolent success; man's fancied security is the prelude to his fall. Like Aeschylus, Herodotus looks behind the natural causes of events and finds a divine hand that guides them. The gods are the guardians of right and crime brings its sure penalties; its consequences extend to generations yet unborn.' The facts of history — such as the defeat of Persia, the fall of Croesus, the fate of Polycrates — are treated by Herodotus as illustrations of the working of these laws. There, in short, is his philosophy of history.

For Thucydides J. B. Bury has claimed that he is 'the first and greatest of all critical historians'. 'The first history, in the true sense of the word . . . written from a purely intellectual point of view, unencumbered with platitudes and moral judgments, cool and critical . . . the work of Thucydides is at every point a contrast to the work of Herodotus.' And again — 'No ancient writer, unless perhaps Thucydides, has grasped the truth that history is an indivisible whole, and that humanity marches according to fixed law towards a determinate end.' But it seems doubtful whether Thucydides did grasp this truth, if truth it be: rather, as Professor Cornford has tersely put it, 'Thucydides sees the field of human action divided between human foresight and chance.' This means that 'he did not conceive nature as a domain of causal law', but he did believe in the interference in the historical process of inscrutable non-human agencies, summed up under the name of Chance or Fortune (τύχη).

Plato's philosophy of history is based on his psychology. He traces all actions and all events back to the source of all motion which is Soul (ψυχή). Natural events may either follow a normal course, or may from time to time be broken into by convulsions of

nature such as floods and earthquakes which destroy whole civilizations. Cities and States rise and flourish for a season, but inevitably perish either by some of those natural convulsions or owing to their own inherent weakness. The vice from which States, like individuals, are most prone to suffer is greed and self-seeking (πλεονεξία), which breeds a spirit of aggression and so leads to war; or if this vice infects some one element in the composite structure of a State, it produces civil discord and strife.

It is only when the rational factor in any organism controls the irrational that the organism as a whole remains stable; but in no mortal and generated creature or institution can that control be permanently secured. Continuous change is the law of Nature and of humanity, although by Divine decree the universe itself is everlasting. The universe, being constructed and ordered by the Divine Artificer, Reason, is as perfect as possible, but within it there lurk some refractory elements which are liable at times to disturb the course of cosmic history, elements or forces which appear under the guise of Necessity or Chance.

God and Nature, Necessity and Chance, Human Art and Human Purpose, all contribute to weave the tangled web of history; and history for Plato is little else than a picture painted on the canvas of time of the workings of eternal postulates and principles. One of these postulates is that which he shares with Herodotus, the law that evil inevitably entails its own punishment, the law of Justice: but no evil is ever to be laid to the charge of God; he never stoops to direct interference with human affairs but leaves all that to secondary causes. Unlike Herodotus, Plato never mentions *Nemesis*, and of *Phthonos* (Envy) he declares that 'it has no place in the Celestial Choir', and again that 'God was good, and in him that is good no *Phthonos* ariseth ever concerning anything' (*Tim.* 29E).

In Aristotle's theology there is no place for any direct concern with history on the part of the Deity, no room for a Providence which has a hand in human affairs.

In the Stoic doctrine it is otherwise. The Stoics present their Divine Logos as an over-ruling Providence, 'whose purpose' — to quote the Hymn of Cleanthes, as rendered by Adam — 'brings to birth, whate'er on land or in the sea Is wrought, or in high heaven's immensity; Save what the sinner works infatuate'. The order of events is regarded as at once rational and necessary, the succession of causes and effects being predetermined. In such a pantheistic doctrine there is no place for Chance, and Nature, Reason (Logos), God, Providence, Destiny are all convertible terms. Such a doctrine raises the problem of evil in an acute form, and the Stoics had much ado to justify the ways of God against the vigorous attacks of their Sceptic opponents. It is to their credit that — as Mr R. D. Hicks

has said — 'In handling this question they displayed the utmost acumen, and it may be doubted whether any subsequent attempt to justify the ways of God to man will ever be more successful than theirs.' They certainly did their best to assert eternal Providence, but the final outcome of its operation, in their view, is to be a general Conflagration in which all that at present exists will be consumed — transformed into the primal substance Fire, the material form of God, who will then be all and in all.

If we turn now from these Hellenic speculations which have a bearing on history to those presented to us in the Hebrew scriptures we shall find much that is similar in so far as the former may be termed 'theocratic', since the Hebrew view of history is 'theocratic' through and through from first to last: in the drama of history God is ever the protagonist. Like Herodotus the Hebrew historians depict the Deity as acting frequently from *Envy*. We find it in the story of the Fall of Man. Why did the Lord God forbid the eating of a certain fruit in the garden of Eden? The reason is plainly stated — 'And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever . . . He drove out the man.' God is jealous of His privileges, and actuated by *Phthonos*. The story of the Tower of Babel exhibits a similar motive; God feared that 'nothing will be restrained from them', so he 'did there confound the language of all the earth'. Throughout the later history, from Moses downwards, God is represented as 'a jealous God' who will not tolerate the worship of any rival deity, although it is not claimed until a comparatively late date that He is the sole existent deity. In the earlier periods He is no more than one among many tribal deities, 'the God of Israel'. His people are bound to Him by a Covenant, and the closeness of the bond is indicated by comparing it to that between Father and Son, or Husband and Wife, as well as Master and Servant. He is a Man of War and fights for them against their enemies, He raises up leaders and captains for them, such as Joshua and the Judges, and in Samuel's days 'the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines'. What especially stirs the ire of Jehovah is the sight of pride and presumption, and any challenge to His own supremacy: He addresses, for instance, 'the virgin daughter of Babylon' in these terms — 'Thou shalt no more be called the Lady of Kingdoms . . . Thou sayest in thine heart, I am and none else beside me' (*Is.* 45). Similarly His word to Edom is 'The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee. Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down' (*Obad.* 3). And experience taught Nebuchadnezzar to say of Him — 'Those that walk in pride He is able to abase', which lesson was also taught to Belshazzar for that he

'had lifted up himself against the God of heaven'. Here, as in Herodotus, the downfall of the high and haughty is ascribed to *Nemesis*, 'the fury of the Lord'. This antagonism is turned mainly against foreign powers, the adversaries of Israel. In His dealings with Israel and Judah what mostly calls forth His indignation is disloyalty and rebellion which manifests itself in the sin of idolatry. To this sin is ascribed the Captivities of Israel and of Judah, God employing Assyria and Babylon as instruments to execute His judgments, and of Babylon — doomed itself to speedy destruction — Jeremiah has the striking sentence, 'Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken' (*Jer.* 51). Similarly Isaiah discerns in Cyrus an instrument of God's vengeance — God 'calling a ravenous bird from the East, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country'.

In one of the Ten Commandments (in *Exod.* 20) we read, 'I the Lord thy God am a *jealous* God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me'. This is the divine rule against which Theognis prayed, which Herodotus recognized, and which Ezekiel denounced. This 'sour grapes' theory was a useful aid to those who were struggling with the problem of evil, since it assumed that the punishment for sin might be deferred; but the injustice of such an assumption was evident to Ezekiel, as to many others in later days.

The primary assumption, which runs through the Old Testament, that there exists an indissoluble bond between the Deity and the descendants of Abraham, the people of 'the Covenant', was inherited by St Paul and by him applied to the Christian community; and it is from him that the Christian 'philosophy of history' is derived. His view of the meaning of history is mainly to be found in *Romans* 9-11: he regards the history of his people as displaying an upward progress from Adam, through Moses, to Christ, which is to issue finally in the completion of the Messianic Kingdom; and he assumes also that a Divine purpose runs through history, which purpose works by means of Selection: Israel has been selected, and to Israel's status as the Elect of God the Christian Church succeeds. The tendency, then, is for the Christian historian to regard all history as 'sacred', agreeing in this with Emerson who wrote 'the man who reveres the soul will learn that there is no profane history; that all history is sacred'.

Our brief sketch of Greek and Hebrew views of history has shown that they all agree in assuming the action upon human history of superhuman powers and Divine influences: they are all more or less 'theocratic'. And while the purely scientific, or 'academic', historian is not concerned to superimpose this, or any other, interpretative theory upon his purely factual findings, it is the main purpose of

'philosophy of history' to extract from those findings some clues to the inner meaning of history, some hints of its ultimate significance. It was not without reason that Schlegel urged that history needs the aid of philosophy if it is to make use of its own conclusions. In his estimate of the works of the three great English historians, Hume, Robertson and Gibbon, he mentions as one of the causes of 'the declining condition of historical science in England the want of a fixed and satisfactory system of philosophy'. 'Without some definite perception of the moral existence of man, his origin and his destination, the historian is hardly competent to decide, or even clearly understand, all the circumstances relative to national events, developments and fortunes. History and Philosophy ought to be as closely united as possible . . . Without the animating principle of philosophy, history is but a senseless heap of waste materials, destitute of inner unity, fixity of purpose or definite result.' Schlegel also insists on 'the necessary connection of profane with sacred history', and declares that 'the spurious history of mankind, which characteristically proceeded from the corrupt sensual material philosophy prevalent in the eighteenth century, is based upon a belief that man grew out of the ground like a mushroom'. As Professor Butterfield observes, when scientific historians 'restrict their realm to what we might almost call the mechanism of historical processes', this gives rise to the cry 'what a bloodless pedestrian thing academic history is! For the sum of our ideas and beliefs about the march of ages we need the poet and the prophet, the philosopher and the theologian'.

Yet while many may demand from the historian something more than an accurate record of the course of events, Montaigne, for one, had no wish that the historian should superimpose upon that record an interpretation of his own devising. 'I love,' he says, 'historians who are either very *sincere* or very *excellent*. The *sincere* who have nothing of their own to mix with it, and who only make it their business to make a faithful collection of all that comes to their knowledge, and faithfully to record all things without choice or prejudice, leaving to us the entire judgment of discerning the truth of things. The most *excellent* sort of historians have judgment to pick out what is most worthy to be known . . . For the *middle* sort of historians (of which the most part are), they spoil all; they will chew our meat for us; they take upon them to judge of, and consequently to incline the history to their own liking; for if the judgment partially lean to one side, a man cannot avoid wresting and writhing his narrative to that byass.' And it is to be feared that the historian who blends philosophy or theology with his history is only too liable to suffer from the vices of partiality and prejudice.

One theory about the history of nations or States is adopted by

Montaigne himself. It is derived, we may suppose, from the Platonic notion that the State may be regarded as the individual Man 'writ large'. 'There is', he writes, 'a wonderful relation and correspondence in this universal government of the works of Nature, which very well makes it appear that it is neither accidental, nor carried on by many masters. The diseases and conditions of our bodies are in like manner manifest in Estates, and the various governments of the world, kingdoms and republics, are founded, flourish and decay with age as we do. We are subject to a repletion of humours, either of those that are good, or else of evil humours, which is the ordinary cause of sickness. Estates are very often sick of the like repletion, and therefore some sorts of purgations have commonly been used.' We might, perhaps, call this the 'anthropological' view of history, and compare it with the 'biological' view of such writers as Spengler who maintain that all cultures have life-cycles, like organisms, so that their course of rise and fall is predetermined.

Granting that there may be some truth in these views, they lead us to consider whether there is any ground for believing in the progress of humanity. If there is a general law that all States and all civilizations decline and fall in the course of time, how can we expect any large-scale progress towards greater heights of human excellence? The Greeks, it would seem, had no such expectation. In their favourite reading of world-history the course of advance was in recurrent cycles, 'Great Year' following on 'Great Year' in endless succession, a fresh start having to be made in all history at the close of every such 'Year'. And the epoch in which we now live was mostly regarded as a period of increasing deterioration, a falling away from a previous 'Golden Age'. The Christian Church would regard progress as measured by the success of its efforts to convert the world, and the degree in which the hope is realized that 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea'. Generally speaking, however, the idea of progress had little effect on the minds of historians, or of thinkers, until the nineteenth century, when the idea of evolution made so deep an impression and gave rise to a fine optimism about the future course of human history, an optimism to which Tennyson gave eloquent expression in *Locksley Hall*, where he looks forward with some confidence to 'the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World':

For I doubt not through the ages, one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the
suns.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

That was written in 1842: 'sixty years after' his tone has lost its youthful confidence, and his optimism is less assured:

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for
your friend.

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will
swerve,

Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming
curve.

And now, nearly fifty years later, 'the wide world's annals' do little to confirm our trust in the speedy improvement of the human race and in the real progress of humanity: our faith has been rudely shaken by the successive shocks within a generation of two world wars: Chaos we know but where, we may well ask, is the Cosmos? But let us consider the idea of progress a little more closely. Humanity is multiform: the world contains a great variety of peoples and races at many different stages of civilization, and it may well be that while some of these do not appear to progress at all, others show signs of definite advance. Moreover, since human efforts manifest themselves in many different spheres, we may discover evidence of progress in some of these spheres, whereas in others there may be no such evidence or even clear indications of retrogression. For instance, it is obvious that while few, if any, peoples seem to have progressed much in respect of moral conduct or political wisdom, quite a number have made striking advances in scientific discovery and in the application of science to practical matters. Granting, then, these facts of partial progress we may ask ourselves how far they give us any reasonable hope of an ultimate general progress of the human race as a whole. If we are looking for a time when 'the war-drums throb no longer and the battle-flags are furled', we must not overlook the obstacles which stand in the way of such a happy consummation. Plato and others have endeavoured to explain why wars arise, and Bacon has some pertinent observations on the subject: 'Upon the breaking and shivering of a great State and Empire you may be sure to have wars. For great Empires, while they stand, do enervate and destroy the forces of the nations which they have subdued, resting upon their own Protecting Forces. And then, when they fail also, all goes to ruin, and they become a Prey. So was it in the Decay of the Roman Empire . . . When a State grows to Over-power, it is like a great Flood, that will be sure to overflow, When there be great Shoals of People, which go on to populate, without foreseeing Means of Life and Sustentation, it is of Necessity, that once in an Age or two, they discharge a Portion of their People upon other Nations . . . When a warlike State grows soft and

effeminate, they may be sure of a War. For commonly such States are grown rich, in the time of their degenerating; and so the Prey inviteth, and their Decay in Valour encourageth a War.' Of the occasions of war which Bacon has here enumerated, the one which seems likely in the near future to prove the most serious obstacle to the political progress of the nations is that which arises from local over-population, 'when there be great shoals of people, which go on to populate, without foreseeing means of life and sustentation'. The increase of the world's population during the past century has been on an alarming scale—alarming because it has so greatly outrun the increase in the world's food-supply. This disparity between the demand for food and the supply, which is most marked in Asiatic countries, is not only the cause of much misery and disease but is certain also to lead to political trouble if not speedily remedied. Wherever it exists it is idle to talk of progress. For progress it would appear that a people requires not merely political security but, what is even more important, economic security in the shape, at least, of a sufficiency of 'Daily Bread'. Thus the great problem for world-statesmanship today is just this—how to equate the world's food-supply with its population; and until this problem is solved the progress of humanity can prove, at the best, but halting and piecemeal.

Progress, however, should imply something more than advance in material welfare: it should involve improvement in morals and culture. Here the chief hindrance lies in the fact that each generation has to start afresh at the task of learning and practising the rules of right conduct. We are not born fully equipped with a knowledge of how life should best be lived, and if we ever acquire that knowledge it can only be by the slow process of education and personal experience. Consequently, moral and cultural progress can be at the best but slow, and it may be halted altogether in any community which suffers from serious set-backs of a political or economic character.

But if we surrender the hope of final progress to an Earthly Paradise at some future date, however distant, and resign ourselves to the admission that to contemplate the building of 'Jerusalem' in this or any other land is but the idle dream of a visionary, what becomes of the idea of Providence, and what room is left for the belief in 'an increasing purpose' running through the ages?

As we have seen, a belief in Providence, or at least in the influence of some superhuman Powers on human history, was widespread in Greece and in Israel. But some Greek thinkers left room also for the play of Chance, while the Hebrews admitted that evil Powers might at times interfere with the beneficent designs of the Deity, so that Providence was not consistently conceived as omnipotent, and continuously omnipresent. Thus the full force of the problem of

evil was to some extent eluded. If, however, we take the idea of Providence seriously that problem remains with us equally seriously, and our only refuge would seem to be to allow the operation of Chance. 'Accident', as Amiel has said, 'plays a vast part in human affairs. Those who have succeeded most in this world (Napoleon or Bismarck) confess it; calculation is not without its uses, but Chance makes mock of calculation, and the result of a planned combination is in no wise proportional to its merit. From the supernatural point of view people say: "This Chance, as you call it, is in reality the action of Providence. Man may give himself what trouble he will — God leads him all the same." Only, unfortunately, this supposed intervention as often as not ends in the defeat of zeal, virtue and devotion, and the success of crime, stupidity and selfishness. Poor, sorely-tried Faith! She has but one way out of the difficulty — the word Mystery!' There is a clear statement of how the problem of evil is at the same time the problem of Providence, a problem for which Amiel can find no clear-cut solution: he leaves it as a 'mystery', like the author of *Job*.

The materialist, be he atheist or agnostic, is of course free from the necessity of facing this problem; as he has no theology, Providence does not for him exist; but the theist and the Christian are bound to face it, as is everyone to whom the materialistic position appears untenable and is intolerable. Let us, then, venture to consider it from a point of view which is rather different from that which seems to be most commonly adopted. In this new approach we begin by revising our conception of the sort of way in which Providence works. And, first, we may take a hint from Plato's method of securing his Supreme Deity from the reproach of responsibility for evil. He represents the Deity as retiring from the mundane scene after he has constructed the Universe and its contents, and has given to the subordinate deities, such as the Star-gods, instructions as to how the management of the Universe is to be carried on through the succeeding ages. Thus the task of acting as 'Providence' devolves upon these inferior divinities, or 'secondary causes', and if fault is to be found, it lies with them rather than with God Himself, the 'first Cause'. Thus to deny God's personal superintendence and direct interference in human affairs, as well as in the control of Nature, may appear at first sight to overthrow all our conceptions of what Deity means. But this is not really so. A striking episode in the life of the prophet Elijah should be enough to suggest the contrary — that episode whereby he was taught to find the presence of the Lord not in wind nor in earthquake nor in fire but in 'a still, small voice'. And this experience befell Elijah in his cave as if to show that it is within 'the Temple-cave' of the inmost self that God speaks to man. Thus the God whom we seem to have dismissed from the field of

history makes His reappearance at the salient point of human life, at the point, it may be, where men least expect to find Him. He reappears, we may also say, as the Inspirer, the office assigned in Christian tradition to the Third Person of the Divine Trinity, the Spirit. He manifests Himself in the religious consciousness of individuals, and His methods of influence, guidance and control are the subtle and secret methods of Divine Wisdom. The mode of His presence in History is well expressed in the familiar lines:

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet!

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

One consequence of this view of the nature of Providence is that in stressing the importance of individuals it tends to make us regard their ultimate destinies as of more interest to Providence than those of States or nations, and it tends also to lessen our own interest in the idea of the progress of humanity as a whole. Another consequence is that, given the belief in immortality, it reveals to us the fact that the earthly history of mankind as we view it here and now is but a small segment of the whole of that history: though kingdoms and States may pass away, and this world itself may come to an end, the individual persons who form the care of Divine Providence continue to live on, continue to make history in another world — in 'azure isles and beaming skies And happy regions of eternal hope'. Thus this conception of Providence tends to shift to an infinite distance the horizon of history; and in the emphasis it lays on the importance of the individual it serves to confirm what truth there is in the dictum of Emerson — 'An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man, and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.' And since the modern tendency seems to be rather to stress the historical importance of the 'common man', it is well to be reminded of the extent to which certain periods of history have been dominated by outstanding personalities, the heroes and prophets of the race. And it is to the creative and inventive genius of individuals that mankind owes all that is finest in its cultural life, all its heritage of literature and art, as well as all its advances in the realm of the natural sciences. If we talk of a 'Providential Order', it is in these achievements of the human mind that the clearest traces of that Order are to be found, since we can attribute those achievements to Divine Inspiration; and the influence of Divine Wisdom on 'the thoughts and intents' of individuals of superior intellectual powers.

Such a doctrine of Providence is of interest to the historian as well as to the theologian inasmuch as it does not confine the action of Providence to the religious sphere but extends it to cover all forms

of mental inspiration. For this it can claim Biblical authority as when we read (in *Exod.* 31) of the craftsman Bezaleel — 'I have filled him with the Spirit of God . . . in all manner of workmanship'. 'What is all history', asked Emerson, 'but the work of ideas, a record of the incomputable energy which his infinite aspirations infuse into man.' And it is in individual minds, in contact with the Divine Mind, that those ideas and those aspirations originate; it is there that history is born, and it is therefrom that it gains its significance. We should not, therefore, be wholly content with Collingwood's statement that, 'The value of history is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.' We should supplement it with his other statement — 'All history is the history of thought.' But even this is insufficient if we are right in our view of Providence and in linking the Divine to the human in the originating of great and fertile ideas and of noble aspirations. Moreover, history may also be valuable in so far as it shows us not only what man has succeeded in doing, but wherein he has failed and how often his best efforts have been frustrated by one cause or another; and if it also teaches us to learn from our failures and our follies. One such lesson taught by history has long been obvious to the religious conscience, the lesson that mankind can never hope by its own unaided efforts to perfect itself or achieve felicity, that it needs the help of some Superior Power, and that an attitude of entire self-reliance is, in the face of the facts of history, a mark of obstinate ineptitude. For the pages of history are full of warnings of how desperately mankind needs to be saved from itself.

Doubts as to God's interference in human affairs may well be raised by reflexion on the course of those affairs, so largely irrational, so chaotic and fortuitous does it seem. If history were directly controlled by God we should expect to see more of order in it, more of evident design. We should expect also a steady advance in righteousness over the whole field of human activity, and a growing sense of brotherhood between all the races of mankind. But what we actually see is something very different: the signs of Divine control, sad to say, are conspicuous by their absence. We seem compelled to say of history what Lucretius said of Nature — '*Hoc tamen ausim Confirmare . . . Nequaquam nobis divinitas esse creatam Naturam mundi: tanta stat praedita culpa*': 'it is chargeable with such grievous faults'. This is so, however, because in our common way of viewing history human affairs are taken, as it were, in the lump. We look for Divine intervention in public events, in the affairs of a State or a nation, and we fail to find any clear instances of it. We are tempted then to conclude hastily that God never intervenes, that He is in fact an Epicurean Deity, 'careless of mankind'. But such a conclusion is at variance with genuine Theism and

Christianity, and a method by which it may be avoided has already been indicated.

Pessimism about human nature and human progress is prevalent in this age and naturally so. Professor Butterfield, for instance, has said 'I accept Acton's thesis in regard to the generality of human wickedness'; 'much of the evil in the world is due to sin'; and he has stressed the danger of 'an over-optimistic view of the character of man; pointing out how selfishness is ingrained, and 'cupidities' rooted in human nature, and how all social classes alike are infected by these vices. Collingwood is less severe: 'Kant's theory of history', he writes, 'is based on a rhetorical pessimism about the folly, wickedness and misery that have characterized the past history of man. This is not a just or sane view of the facts. At all times in the past about which anything is known, there have been occasions when men were wise enough to think successfully what they had to think, good enough to do efficiently what they had to do, and happy enough to find life not only tolerable but attractive. Passion and ignorance have certainly done their work in past history; but they have never been mere passion and mere ignorance: they have been rather a blind and blundering will for good, and a dim and deluded wisdom.' There is a suggestion here of the Socratic dictum that vice is a form of ignorance, as virtue is a form of knowledge; and it may help to hearten those who — like Amiel a century ago — are loth to despair of the future of mankind. Amiel's attitude to the question is worth recalling: 'From the point of view of the ideal, humanity is *triste* and ugly. But if we compare it with its probable origins, we see that the human race has not altogether wasted its time. Hence there are three possible views of history: the view of the pessimist, who starts from the ideal; the view of the optimist, who compares the past with the present; and the view of the hero-worshipper, who sees that all progress whatever has cost oceans of blood and tears . . . Everywhere the élite of each generation suffers for the salvation of the multitude . . . Perdition and redemption in and through each other is the destiny of men . . . When humanity has cut its wisdom-teeth, then perhaps it will have the grace to reform itself, and the will to attempt a systematic reduction of its share of the evil in the world. The *Weltgeist* will pass from the state of instinct to the moral state. War, hatred, selfishness, fraud, the right of the stronger, will be held to be old-world barbarisms, mere diseases of growth. The pretences of modern civilization will be replaced by real virtues. Men will be brothers, peoples will be friends, races will sympathize one with another, and mankind will draw from love a principle of emulation, of invention and of zeal, as powerful as any furnished by the vulgar stimulant of interest. This millennium — will it ever be? It is at least an act of piety to believe in it!' Such a belief may indeed

be pious, but the grounds upon which it rests are by no means secure; nor is it altogether safe to personalize 'humanity', or to regard the *Weltgeist* — 'good swimmer' though Emerson called it — as an actual living force or anything more than a fiction, the product of the hypostatizing imagination. To treat of 'Humanity' or 'Mankind' as though it were a single and conscious being, capable of remembering its own past and of anticipating its own future, may be a convenient device excusable in a rhetorician but bound to lead to confusion if employed in serious argument. We must not credit logical *genera* with minds of their own.

In conclusion, let us return to our starting-point and consider whether our rather discursive discussion has succeeded in throwing any light on the questions there proposed. Is human history purely fortuitous, all at the mercy of Chance; or is it wholly predetermined by Necessity or Fate; or is it under the control and guidance of God, or gods? We have seen what answers have been given to these questions by the historians and thinkers of Biblical and Classical times and by orthodox Christian tradition. We have suggested that the current notion of the methods of operation of Divine Providence might with advantage be modified. We have shown reason to doubt that history assures us of the inevitability of the general progress of mankind as a whole, while we have emphasized the importance for history of the achievements of individuals, the *noblesse* of the race. In fine, the main significance of history would seem to lie in its disclosure of the great heights to which men are capable of ascending when inspired by an ardent love of Goodness, of Beauty and of Truth, and, on the other hand, to what depths of folly and wickedness they are capable of descending when their ears are deaf to the Voice and their eyes blind to the Light from Heaven. For history presents to us on one page a *Paradiso*, on the next a *Purgatorio*, indiscriminately it may seem, but without doubt significantly, since the former pages come to so small a total when compared with the latter. This is enough to depress the observant historian, though he may be to some degree reassured by recalling the fact that the economic and cultural development of a people is largely dependent on its physical environment — the situation, the climate, and the fertility of the soil of the district which it inhabits. To this fact Plato called attention, and he regarded it as at least partly responsible for the moral characteristics which differentiated different races — for the avarice of the Phoenicians, for example, and the courage of the Northern barbarians. This influence of topography has recently been stressed by Toynbee, who explains the rise or fall of peoples as largely governed by their success or failure in meeting the demands made upon them by their environment, whether physical or human. Thus a people is not to be hastily condemned for its failure to

advance or for its gradual deterioration as though these were entirely due to its own voluntary action or inaction, whereas they may have been chiefly caused by the irremediable disadvantages of its natural situation and conditions of life. Nor is this an idle excuse for the persistence of comparative barbarism in many places down through the centuries. This side-light on one aspect of the problem of progress is just another of the lessons which history has to teach us, another of 'the conclusions deducible from history which are of importance for the guidance of mankind', which serves to justify our faith that the question put in our first sentence; 'has history any real significance' can definitely be answered in the affirmative. And when it is asserted that 'The revolt against the religious interpretation of history is one of the most important events of history itself', the importance of that revolt must be judged on a consideration of the grounds upon which it is based, and of the exact character of 'the religious interpretation of history' which is being attacked or discarded, since, as has been shown, more than one such 'interpretation' is possible.

To one class of persons at least history has a sinister lesson to impart:

Go, search the shores of History, — mark there
The Oppressor's lot, the Tyrant's destinies;
Behold the Wrecks of Ages; and despair!

CAN HOMER BE TRANSLATED?

H. W. JONES

1

HERE¹ indeed is an Everyman's Homer — not, it is true, a 'folk-tale' translation as was Dr Rouse's, but rather a poetical Tract for the Times, a practical manifesto on present-day theories about rendering the classics (so well discussed in the introductions to the various volumes of the same series, particularly, I think, the *Lucretius*), and a challenge both to past translators and to current investigation and scholarship. 'My one object', wrote Matthew Arnold in 1861 (in *On Translating Homer*), 'is to give practical advice to a translator; and I shall not in the least concern myself with theories of translation', and he then goes on to make the statement which has become perhaps the cornerstone of critical comment upon Homer and round which I propose to centre my remarks: 'If the scholar in judging a translation looks to detail rather than to general effect, he judges it pedantically and ill . . . The translator of Homer really has no good model before him for any part of his work, and has to invent everything for himself. He is to be rapid in movement, plain in speech, simple in thought, and noble; and *how* he is to be either rapid, or plain, or simple, or noble, no one yet has shown him.' Indeed, could the issue be better or more fairly put? I propose then, not to relate the remarks quoted to Arnold's critical tenets (fascinating though such a study would be) but rather to use Arnold's requirements as criteria in considering Dr Rieu's version, and then to offer some proposals of my own.

One could hardly do better as a start, perhaps, than to recall some remarks made by the late Virginia Woolf in her delightful essay 'On not knowing Greek' (in *The Common Reader*). Reminding us of the truism that we do not know how classical Greek was pronounced, she says that 'the quality that first strikes us in Greek literature' is 'the lightning-quick, sneering, out-of-doors manner' (by 'sneering' I think she means 'conversational' or 'quipping') and that, therefore, in Homer 'every sentence had to explode on striking the ear, however slowly and beautifully the words might descend, and however enigmatic might their final purport be'. 'Translators', she says later, 'can but offer us a vague equivalent; their language is necessarily full of echoes and associations.' She sums up: 'To understand him [Homer] it is not so necessary to understand Greek as to understand

¹ HOMER: A New Translation by E. V. Rieu; *The Odyssey*, 1945; *The Iliad*, 1950. Penguin Books.

poetry.' These remarks, which state so well what surely every reader of Homer himself feels, will be found on closer inspection to amplify rather than to add to Arnold's: she is stressing the difficulty of reproducing the natural, the *ingénu* characteristic of the Homeric manner. Let us at present do no more than note the felicity of Mrs Woolf's observations, and turn forthwith to Dr Rieu.

His version (before which, by the way, there have been some thirty English translations of the whole of Homer since Chapman) is direct; he is rapid; within the medium of his chosen prose he is noble; and he is usually plain:

However, as the stranger has sought refuge in your house, I will fit him out in a good cloak and tunic, give him a two-edged sword and sandals for footwear, and see that he reaches his destination, wherever that may be. But I should be glad if you could agree to keep him at the farm and look after him. I'll send you the clothes and all the food he'll need, so that he shan't be a burden to you and your mates. But I will not permit him to come down to the palace and meet the suitors. (*Od.* XVI; p. 255¹.)

And again:

The lady Here then went in again and sat down on her throne, while the pair flew off on their errand. When they reached Mount Ida of the many springs, the mother of sheep, they found the all-seeing Son of Cronos sitting on the summit of Gargarus, enveloped in a perfumed mist. They presented themselves to Zeus the Cloud-compeller and awaited his pleasure. Zeus noted their arrival, and having no fault to find with their dispatch in carrying out his Consort's orders, began by giving Iris her instructions. (*Il.* XV; p. 275.)

But there are two obvious objections to Dr Rieu's version, and hints of these may be found even in the two brief extracts quoted. First and most important, *it is not poetry* (in other words, it fails to convey satisfactorily the Homeric intensity of manner—high seriousness or dignity, if you will—that is inseparable from the matter). And secondly; throughout his translation Dr Rieu is too fond of the technical word; surely the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of all poems must be those in the reading of which one should *never* find it necessary to consult an English dictionary? Let us take the more serious charge first. Though Dr Rieu's version, as I complain, lacks intensity and urgency, the fault is not really the translator's but that of his chosen medium, for does not his repudiation of verse (and even of any form of *vers libre*) cause a dilution of the thought he is translating? (Mr Day Lewis's *Georgics* is far superior here.) And for the

¹ My references are to pages of the Penguin Books edition.

second point, to the modern reader the technical word, unless very carefully used, must surely have exactly that power of evoking in him precisely such associations as those noted by Mrs Woolf; it strays very near to jargon. Examples alone should suffice in justification of this second criticism: 'a double cloak, with a thick nap on the wool' (*Il.* X. 134; p. 184); 'Hephaestus the great Architect' (XX. 12; p. 366, not in the original); 'his spear propped against a tamarisk on the bank' (XXI. 17; p. 380); 'His good ship is yawing' (XXIII. 317; p. 420); 'A herdsman can send a boomerang flying' (XXIII. 845; p. 435; καλαῦρος, 'crook'); '(The Sirens) broke into their liquid (λυτρός, 'clear') song' (*Od.* XII. 183; p. 199); 'They stept [*sic*] it [the mast] in its hollow box' (XV. 289; p. 245); 'You should give me a bigger dole than the rest' (XVII. 417; p. 278); why these affected archaisms?; and 'staunching the blood with a spell' (XIX. 456; p. 309), with the unnecessary ambiguity.

Dr Rieu's accuracy is praiseworthy; his evocation (perhaps deliberate) of the English poets hardly so: 'Scylla was not born for death' (*Od.* XII. 125; p. 197); 'a coign of vantage' (X. 145; p. 162); 'Patroclus reached his sovran lord, Achilles' (*Il.* XVI. 2; p. 292); and the liturgical 'my bounden duty' (*Od.* X. 271; p. 166). And slang or colloquial near-slang must surely be handled with great care: '... Some Messenians having lifted sheep from Ithaca, shepherds and all ...' (*Od.* XXI. 18; p. 326); 'scouting round the rock' (XII. 95; p. 196); 'his mates' (XIV. 25; p. 221); 'these porkers, which are all we serfs can offer you' (XIV. 80; p. 223); and 'a square meal ... scot-free' (XIV. 408, 417; p. 232). These slang expressions are hardly of the same category as those employed by Rouse in accordance with his fixed and preconceived theories. Again: 'the apple of your mother's eye' (II. 365; p. 44); 'that snake in the grass Aegysthus' (III. 198; p. 52); 'catpaw from the west' (IV. 402; p. 73); 'I sheered off' (VII. 280; p. 120); '... Cicones, their up-country neighbours' (IX. 48; p. 142); and 'The gods have made you daft' (XXIII. 11; p. 352). Dr Rieu is far more successful in his later *Iliad*, where he obtains some fine effects by the same device: 'The panic-stricken Danaans fled among the hollow ships, and hell was let loose' (*Il.* XII, last lines; p. 233); 'It cuts me to the quick' (XV. 208; p. 277); 'in a tight corner' (XVII. 721; p. 335); 'Aeneas ducked' (XX. 278; p. 373); 'He will eat humble pie' (XXI. 338; p. 389); and 'You were too cocksure. But then you're so glib' (XXII. 280; p. 404).

Is it, then, to the reader's preconceived and unchangeable state of mind, open to every suggestion and echo, literary and evocative, with which he approaches a book, that the translator must address himself? Ambiguity must be carefully eschewed: one wonders what a reader previously unfamiliar with *The Odyssey* would make of Dr Rieu's

title to Book XXI, 'The Great Bow', although he could hardly trip over the 'free hospitality' of Pheidon (*Od.* XIV. 315; p. 230) or the description of Ilus as (I. 300; p. 28) 'a god-fearing man' applied to a polytheist. And though accuracy must at all times be diligently sought for by the translator, he is working for his own age and should not hesitate, even at the expense of forfeiting literal accuracy, to avoid or expunge expressions likely to set in motion the 'associative ripples' in a reader's mind — or at least such as he knows to be common to all readers, for he can neither assess nor provide against a personal response. For instance, the expression 'buxom wives' (*Od.* IV. 623; p. 79), even if one had some knowledge of the history of the word 'buxom', is hardly a happy one and should have been avoided. Yet a departure from literal accuracy may fully justify itself, as in: 'Darkness swallowed all the tracks' (*Od.* III, last line; p. 61), or in: 'We can beat a retreat to our farm among the orchards. Once there, we shall see' (XXIII. 139-40; p. 355), or in: 'A river swollen by winter rain (has thrust) the misbegotten thing [a boulder] over the brow of a hill' (*Il.* XIII. 136; p. 237), or in: 'The clamour from the two armies reached the upper air and assaulted the lamp of day' (XIII, last line; p. 256). It is in the translation of metaphors or of images that one must be especially careful; and one must not, surely, manufacture an image absent in the original: 'Well, friend, are you in better odour with the young lords, or do they still turn up their noses at you here? . . . They have not a shred of decency among them' (*Od.* XX; p. 318). But as often as possible one should carry over implied metaphor, as in: 'the unlovely (στῦγερὸς) dark' (*Il.* XIII. 672; p. 252), or in: 'The plume nodded' (XVI. 138; p. 295), or in: 'purple death' (XVI. 334; p. 301). And, of course, one must never 'sink': 'Come along, you fellows' (*Od.* VIII. 133; p. 126) suggests Billy Bunter rather than 'worthy Laodamas'.

Before we sum up the special merits of Dr Rieu's version and then pass to alternative suggestions on the translation of Homer, there is room for a short digression. Do I anticipate a rejoinder if I say that to reply to my strictures: 'But I did not *try* to put over the effects, the lack of which your critic bewails; he is criticizing me over something which I never set out to do in the first place', is in fact no answer? Before we attempt any piece of translation we must first form a clear idea of how our author's manner (or mannerisms) may best be rendered without excessive distortion of his matter. Now Homer is never bookish, and this, I think, is the very reason why he is so difficult to translate: he is writing in and for a folk-culture, a culture which (as Tolstoy complained) it seems unlikely we can ever recapture. But we can, to a certain extent, compensate for this by acquiring some idea, however crude, of the civilization for which Homer makes his poem. We cannot force Homer to compose for our culture any more

than we can get him to speak our tongue; at best we can only meet him half way, as Martin Luther tried to meet the Prophets, so insuperable the difficulty he found in trying to make them speak German. And here I believe lie many of the merits of T. E. Lawrence's version of Homer, merits which derive from qualifications which the translator was aware of himself as will be explained if we quote Lawrence:

I'm in as strong a position vis-à-vis Homer as most of his translators. For years we were digging up a city of roughly the *Odysseus* period. I have handled the weapons, armour, utensils of those times, explored their houses, planned their cities. I have hunted wild boars and watched wild lions, sailed the Aegean (and sailed ships), bent bows, lived with pastoral peoples, woven textiles, built boats and killed many men. So I have odd knowledges that qualify me to understand the *Odyssey*, and odd experiences that interpret it to me. (Letter to Bruce Rogers, January 31st, 1931.)

Precisely; and here we are back at Mrs Woolf's dictum: 'To understand Homer it is not so necessary to understand Greek as to understand poetry.' Surely the *genius loci* must have some influence upon a translator, for will we not understand Ibsen better when we have seen a fjord and, what is more important, put our hand upon the pulse of the life going on round it? May we not (restricting the point to primitive peoples and not pushing it forward to the absurdity of applying it to highly industrialized societies) learn something of (say) Virgil by sharing the thoughts, the desires, the way of life of the more remote Italian peasantry? Homer sang to be heard; and if we tackle him in the study we shall misunderstand him.

To return to Dr Rieu, let us now juxtapose his version with those of three other translators; I select *Odyssey* XVIII. 290ff; p. 292:

The others agreed and each sent off his squire to fetch a gift. For Antinous they brought a long embroidered robe of the most beautiful material on which were fixed a dozen golden brooches, each fitted with a curved sheath for the pin; and for Eurymachus a golden chain of exquisite workmanship strung with amber beads that gleamed like the sun. For Eurydamas his two squires brought a pair of earrings, each a thing of lambent beauty with its cluster of three drops; while from the house of Prince Peisander, Polyctor's son, there came a servant with a necklace which was a lovely piece of jewellery too. Thus each of the young lords contributed his own valuable gift, and presently the lady Penelope withdrew to her upper apartment escorted by her waiting-women, who carried the magnificent presents. From then till dusk the Suitors gave themselves up to the pleasures of dancing and delights of song.

Here is the version, with its Preraphaelite flavour, of Butcher and Lang (1924):

So spake Antinous, and the saying pleased them all, and each man sent a henchman to bring his gifts. For Antinous his henchman bare a broidered robe, great and very fair, wherein were golden brooches, twelve in all, fitted with well bent clasps. And the henchman straightway bare Eurymachus a golden chain of curious work, strung with amber beads, shining like the sun. And his squires bare for Eurydamas a pair of ear-rings, with three drops well wrought, and much grace shone from them. And out of the house of Peisander the prince, son of Polyctor, the squire brought a necklet, a very lovely jewel. And likewise the Archæans brought each one some other beautiful gift. Then the fair lady went aloft to her upper chamber, and her attendant maidens bare for her the lovely gifts, while the wooers turned to dancing and the delight of song, and therein took their pleasure, and awaited the coming of eventide.

And now, that of Francis Caulfeild (1921):

Thus so did Antinous speak: and all approved his suggestion. They did each send, to his house, a steward to bring back his present:

And, to Antinous, brought they a great robe skilfully woven, Broidered in colours, and furnished with buckles of gold to secure it:

Twelve were the buckles in all, with tongues of artful contrivance.

And to Eurymachus brought they a necklace of intricate pattern,

Golden, with amber beads, that shone like the sun in its brightness.

And two attendants brought for Eurydamas glittering ear rings,

Each with three gems, which shed a radiant beauty round them.

And, from the room of Peisander, the son of the chieftain Polyctor,

Brought they a collar, a triumph to see of the art of the goldsmith. . . .¹

And lastly, here is the rendering of Samuel Butler (1900), in his revised version of 1922:

¹ Other versions that will readily suggest themselves are those of Mackail, Cowper, Pope, T. E. Buckley and F. L. Lucas, and that of Lang, Leaf and Myers.

The others applauded what Antinous had said,¹ and each one sent his servant to bring his present. Antinous's man returned with a large and lovely dress most exquisitely embroidered. It had twelve beautifully made brooch pins of pure gold with which to fasten it. Eurymachus immediately brought her a magnificent chain of gold and amber beads that gleamed like sunlight. Eurydamas's two men returned with some earrings fashioned into three brilliant pendants which glistened most beautifully, while King Peisander, son of Polyctor, gave her a necklace of the rarest workmanship, and every one else brought her a beautiful present of some kind.

Then the queen went back to her room upstairs, and her maids brought the presents after her. Meanwhile the suitors took to singing and dancing, and staid till evening came. They danced and sang till it grew dark; they then brought in three braziers to give light, and piled them up with chopped firewood very old and dry, and they lit torches from them, which the maids held up turn and turn about.

The most interesting point that emerges from the juxtaposition of these versions is not the purely superficial conclusions that may be reached at once concerning points of vocabulary and syntax, but the often-proved contention that every age must make its own translations of the classics; our versions are not those of a hundred years ago. Again, an instructive point is the differing ways in which the translators handle the sentence-structure of the original and the various liberties — quite necessary, of course — which they take with it; it would be a profitable exercise to examine how the translators differ over the thought-units into which they divide their version, an interesting and often overlooked question. With the qualification made previously, that some of them are in prose, all the extracts will be allowed to have the merits of speed, dignity, simplicity of thought and (we are speaking with some reservations) plainness of speech. Butler's is perhaps the most masculine; it is clear and natural, though the affected 'staid' seems hard to explain. The more one knows Butler's prejudices, the more one admires his good sense and the directness of his *Odyssey*. Against the version of Butcher and Lang may be objected its unnecessary archaisms, a certain pomposity of style ('and much grace shone from them') — this quasi-Biblical flavour is quite out of place — and the 'romanticizing' of the characters, for Penelope is hardly enhanced by being called a 'fair lady'. But, although something significant emerges from a comparison of the manner in which different translators have dealt with a particular

¹ A Homeric convention, of course: cf. *Od.* XII. 352 and XVIII. 422. I have not seen any complete classification and discussion of these that fully satisfies me.

passage, Matthew Arnold's suggestion (made in 'The Study of Poetry': *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series) that short extracts from authors are sufficient materials to act as touchstones by which to assess the merits of great writing, is untenable: when dealing with translations, one must judge the whole, together with the author's introduction and any critical remarks he may offer on his views of his author and on translation itself.

2

Arnold's conditions for a good translation of Homer are, in general, unambiguous. 'Plain speech' I take in the Wordsworthian sense of 'a selection of the language really used by men' (my italics); 'simplicity' I interpret as coincident with dignity, and not ingenuousness or *naïveté* — 'simplicité' and not 'simplesse'; and 'movement' means the degree of closeness with which the style of the translator succeeds in following the Homeric rapidity of thought. Let us start with metre, remembering that the form and content of verse may be discussed apart only as a convenience and are not in fact independent of one another. Arnold, one remembers, proposed an unrhymed hexameter, like that of Caulfeild, as the ideal English medium for translating Homer: at its best it can be very good indeed:

Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia;
Known to me well are the faces of all; their names I remember;
Two, two only remain, whom I see not among the commanders,

Castor fleet in the car, — Polydeukes brave with the cestus, —
Own dear brethren of mine, — one parent loved us as infants.
Are they not here in the host, from the shores of loved Lacedaemon,

Or, though they came with the rest in ships that bound through the waters,

Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the council of Heroes?¹

But its dangers are twofold. The hexameter is not native to English, however skilfully handled (one remembers the difficulties of its advocates, from Gabriel Hervey to Bridges; whilst successful experiments in the metre, such as those of Tennyson and Clough, are rarely sustained), and, secondly, the disadvantage of persistently reiterated 'light endings' or final syllables, gives a flippant effect quite foreign to Homer (John Fletcher the Jacobean dramatist found its numbing effect difficult enough to avoid in blank verse). Another attendant defect is that the metre tends to break up the sentences of the original, necessitating too many dashes, and thereby interrupting

¹ HAWTREY: *English Hexameter Translations* (1847), p. 242.

its speed. Nor am I happy about a variant of the hexameter — the roughly hexameter-length free-rhythm unrhymed form — as a vehicle for the translation of Homer; it has all the faults of the pure hexameter with no compensating advantages. And the imposed formality of a version in stanzas (such as that of J. W. Mackail) surely puts it out of court.

One aspect of the poetic technique (not of the prosody) of Homer has yet, I feel, not been adequately taken into account by translators, namely, that his use of 'set phrases', such as 'the wine-dark sea', 'Aegis-bearing Athene', 'purple death' and so on, is inseparable from the fact that his metre is of popular origin. The translator can utilize this, for it corresponds roughly with the 'kennings' of Anglo-Saxon poetry — half-lines frequently consisting of mere poetical tags and stock-in-trade phrases. Ballad metre, one of the forms employing such fixed devices, though more sparsely and effectively than early verse does, and though also a 'folk-metre', obviously will not do for translating Homer, for not only is its stanza shape too clear-cut and independent and (even if used, as an innovation, unrhymed) rhythmically marked, like a choral or dramatic ode, but also because a ballad describes a tale or scene in cameos, each detached from the others: it 'clicks' overmuch, like the version of Chapman, whose lines are really ballad stanzas in disguise:

This speech all Trojans did applaud
Who from their traces loos'd
Their sweating horse, which severally
With headstalls they repos'd

And fasten'd by their chariots,
When others brought from town
Fat sheep and oxen, instantly,
Bread, wine, and hewèd down

Huge store of wood: the winds transferr'd
Into the friendly sky
Their suppers savour, to the which
They sate delightfully.¹

Balladry, again, does not always fully take advantage of consonantal and vowel music — again inseparable from rhythmic effects as a whole — and English is especially rich in vowel-sounds and dipthongs.

There is, however, a metre which does utilize these resources, and does to a greater degree than any other. A specimen will show its possibilities:

¹ *Iliad* VIII, 480ff.

Thus agreed,

Each sent off his squire to seek forth a present,
 They brought, rich-embroidered with twelve brooches of gold,
 The bolts deep embedded within bended clasps,
 For Antinous a cloak large and comely;
 And for Eurymachus a gold chain as well wrought,
 Bestrung with beads of amber that burned like the sun.
 For Eurydamas was fetched in a pair of ear-rings
 By his two attendants: tongued each ring
 As if clasped and enclathed in a cluster of three drops:
 And Prince Peisander, son of Polycctor,
 Sent forth a servant with as splendid a necklace . . .¹

The reader will perhaps recognize this as an experiment in the traditional Alliterative Metre of Middle English. I need not detail its rules and characteristics here, for they are to be found in any text book on the literature of the fifteenth century or, attractively set out, in Dr C. S. Lewis's *Rehabilitations*. Briefly, the line consists of approximately equal halves or hemistiches, the first usually containing two alliterative sounds, vowel or consonantal, and the second, one. The same alliterative sound is retained for each line, and the metre allows of great metrical freedom and subtlety. It is obvious that for my purposes I interpret its rules quite loosely, allowing myself some licence over the cesura and the alliteration:

. . . Penelope presently went to her upper apartment
 With her waiting-women as wards of her gifts.
 Till dusk the delights of dance and of song
 Seized the suitors, and with set of sun
 They continued carousing; three braziers
 Were set in the homestead to supply light
 And laden with newly-cut logs, dry and seasoned.
 The burning brands they thrust in each brazier
 And by turns the attendants trimmed the lights.

It will be allowed, I think, that this version has three of Arnold's requirements: it is rapid, it is plain, in the main it is simple, and I believe it has dignity. Its defects are likewise quite patent: the search for alliteratives, like that for rhymes, does lead in places to circumlocution and to some sacrifice of the 'natural word' ('wards of her gifts'); there are at least two unrealized metaphors ('embedded', 'clasped and enclathed'); the sense in the third line is distorted, for one does not embroider with a brooch, and the phrase is likewise grammatically suspect, being in apposition to 'they', not to 'cloak'; early in the passage it appears as if the clothes are to belong to the

¹ *Od.* XVIII, 290ff; Rieu, p. 292.

suitors and not to Penelope; at the end the sex of the servants is wrongly left indeterminate; 'burning brands' is not truly alliterative; and 'newly-cut' suggests a contradiction, namely that the wood was but freshly taken from the tree and therefore could hardly be 'dry and seasoned' — 'newly-chopped' would perhaps get over the difficulty. These flaws (and no doubt the reader will find several more), however, are surely compensated for by the speed and air of inevitability of the passage. It is poetry; it has the required intensity wanting in a prose version. The metre is capable of fine emotional effects:

I was war of a womman worthily y-clothed,
 Purfled with pelure, the finest upon erthe,
 Y-crowned with a crown, the king hath none better.¹

The alliteration serves a function akin to that attributed by Dryden to rhyme; it is as it were the rod and line serving to keep the building upright which otherwise 'lawless imagination' would raise either irregularly or loosely. And allowing one's self some freedom in composition (such as not troubling to ensure that the alliterative sounds are always those stressed), one can write it quite readily. One of its disadvantages is that perhaps it is not as suitable for speeches as for narrative verse:

'I'll say it all again,' said Eumedes' son Dolon,
 'The Carians and the Paeonians with their bent bows
 Lie over by the sea with the Leleges,
 The Caucones and the princely Pelasgi;
 But the Lycians, the lordly Mysians, likewise the Phrygians,
 Master-horsemen, and the Maeonian charioteers
 Were given the ground over against Thymbra.
 Yet why must I mention all this? Do you mean
 To seize upon our posts? Apart, alone
 At the limit of the line lie the newly-come Thracians,
 And Rhesus their ruler, Eioneus' son,
 Who has horses as huge and as handsome as any
 I have seen; snow-white they are, swift as the wind;
 His chariot gear is gay with gold and silver
 And he himself has fine golden armour too — a splendid sight;
 Such should not be borne by someone mortal —
 It is good for the glorious gods alone.
 Now will you shift me to your ships or else secure me
 Here, tightly tied, while you go off to test
 If I have told you truth or falsehood?'²

I have chosen this passage because of the especial difficulties it

¹ LANGLAND: *Piers the Plowman*, Passus II.

² *Iliad* X; Rieu, p. 192.

presents to the translator in the metre I have suggested: the names, which of necessity rob certain lines of their full alliterative complement; the conversational tone, which necessitates some lines being run into those following; and the speed of the passage which sometimes, advantageously I think, conceals the alliteration and prevents too obvious an intrusion which would give an air of artificiality. But even so, it may perhaps be allowed that the metre recaptures the 'lightning-quick, sneering, out-of-doors manner' demanded by Virginia Woolf, and at the same time avoids many of the faults of 'translators' language', 'necessarily full of echoes and associations'.

STRAVINSKY AND THE PROBLEMS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY MUSIC

RONALD TAYLOR

THERE was a time when to write about Stravinsky offered either a convenient pretext for joining in the heated battle for or against the value of twentieth century music, or an occasion for the familiar invertebrate descriptive matter in which music criticism is so rich, where the author apparently relied on the vigorous personality of his subject to animate his writing. The event of Stravinsky's seventieth birthday in June last, together with the appearance of his opera *The Rake's Progress* a short time previously, invited a cooler and more discerning review of the creative activity, covering almost fifty years, of this controversial and highly successful musician.

The lack of moderation which is so common in those critical essays which have seen in Stravinsky's music a challenge to be taken up or turned down, represents to a large extent a spontaneous reaction to what is by any standard a quite astonishing heterogeneity of subjects and styles. It became evident that the critical faculty was frequently baffled by seemingly unmotivated shiftings of ground. As time went on without any prospect of stability, comprehension sagged lower and vociferousness became more strident; but although the spirit of partisanship is still far from being absent, it is possible today to look dispassionately at the ensemble of Stravinsky's works without succumbing to the common complaint of not being able to see the wood for the trees.

It is appropriate to array first in order the principal landmarks in Stravinsky's output so that the extent of its historical and stylistic range may be appreciated. The first considerable work to appear was the ballet music to *L'Oiseau de Feu* (1910), essentially in the Russian Romantic tradition of Rimsky-Korsakov, which is continued in the equally successful *Petroushka* (1911). *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) breaks with this tradition in favour of programmatic impressionism, but this striking essay is his only contribution to impressionist music. By 1917 the choreographic divertissement *Les Noces* was virtually finished, though it did not appear till 1923; it is a strange blend of the spirit of Russian national life and dark Oriental techniques, bound together by the emphasis on rhythm so prominent in *Le Sacre du Printemps*. It is also largely on the exploitation of rhythmic elements that *L'Histoire du Soldat* (1918) depends — a story related, acted and danced to music which is on the one hand a colder, more detached experiment in the rhythmic idiom which had already received a

warmer embodiment, and on the other an anticipation, in the satirical chorales, of the neo-classicism to come. This neo-classicism made its first full-blooded appearance in the Pergolesi pastiche ballet *Pulcinella* (1920), and the overwhelming majority of his works since then — the Piano Concerto (1924), *Oedipus Rex* (1926-27), *Apollo Musagetes* (1927), *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), *Persephone* (1934), *Symphony in C* (1943), *The Rake's Progress* (1951) and others — have, with a few lapses from grace, been more or less in this tradition. Neo-classicism is more an attitude than a particular style, and it embraces with Stravinsky the idioms *inter alia* of the earlier and later German eighteenth century (Bach and Mozart), seventeenth-century France and eighteenth-century Italy.

This essay is not concerned with describing or evaluating the works of Stravinsky as such, but it is concerned with their significance in their historical setting, that is to say, with aesthetic outlooks and practices as manifestations of an intellectual and spiritual climate. For this reason it is worth while pointing out, what is really self-evident, that Stravinsky's various phases are not simply phenomena *in vacuo* but reactions of a creative intelligence to the prevailing emotional currents of the moment. The savage orgiastic impressionism of *Le Sacre du Printemps* gives way to the self-conscious surrealist incongruities of *L'Histoire du Soldat* as the disruption of the pre-1914 world leads to an uneasy lightheartedness and a despairing self-sufficiency; ensuing realization of a failing competence and adequacy is countered by an appeal to the reassuring spirit of acknowledged serenity and greatness in some enviable former age. And as the weight of the failures and deficiencies of the twentieth century settled more and more heavily on the mind, so Stravinsky continued to draw on the past, offering us only two years ago a full-scale opera cast in the formal mould of the eighteenth century. An attempt will be made later to see how far this correlation between individual style and circumstantial background forces represents the involuntary submission of the will to irresistible pressure from without, and how far it conveys a conscious decision to move with the times in the van of artistic taste and opinion.

Whatever the nature of the motivating powers behind Stravinsky's art, the picture it presents is clearly of an unsettled, almost wayward mind. The stages of his development mark less the progress of an earnest search for an ideal of self-expression, a movement towards maturity, than the anxious efforts of a man struggling, more with the aid of specially designed equipment than by his own perception and deliberation, to find a foothold on the crumbling surface of values beneath him. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the question of the material and moral decay which no European living between the two World Wars, let alone a Russian exiled from his country, could

escape, yet it remains true that the real artist confronts and 'lives' such issues — he does not evade them. Much in modern music, or indeed in any other modern art, falls, despite its accomplished craftsmanship, at this first hurdle, however exhilarating may be its abandon, persuasive its charm, or realistic its gravity.

How does Stravinsky view the work of the artist in the light of the movements and events of his time, and what is his attitude towards his own music? In 1935 he published a two-volume memoir which made it possible for the outsider to see into the workings of his mind. This autohagiography, *Chroniques de ma Vie*, has for the critical inquirer the advantage of being relatively free from extended anecdotal and circumstantial description on the one hand, and importunate desires to air favourite theories on the other, both of which afflictions hang heavily, for example, on the musical writings of Richard Wagner. Apart from the well-defined impression we receive of Stravinsky the man, the *Chronicle* admits us to a knowledge of the thoughts that stimulate his musical imagination and the ways he has approached the various enterprises, such as the Diaghilev ballet, in which he has taken part and to which he owes a great deal of his international reputation. Also his egoistic *naïveté* relieves us of any anxiety that he is concealing something and making us scratch below the surface for his real meaning. In so far as it relates to his own art, we may take what he says at its face value.

To the artistic problems that he feels cross his path — and they seem almost entirely to be questions of technique and application — Stravinsky brings a supreme self-confidence. 'I always did,' he writes, 'and still do, prefer to achieve my aims and solve any problems which confront me in my work solely by my own efforts, without having recourse to established processes which do, it is true, facilitate the task, but which must first be learned and then remembered.' It is difficult to know what to make of this astonishing heresy, which appears not only to set no store by great precedents but also to give the lie to Stravinsky's own neo-classical style. However, we are not here occupied simply with the rights and wrongs of his ideas or with their relationship to his musical practice, so that the statement can be taken for our purpose as it stands. As such it seems to apply to the sort of technical problem that arises when the composer feels a desire to explore a certain medium or set himself a certain task, and it is abundantly clear from Stravinsky's account that such is the main end and concern of his musical creation. Time and again we see that his incentive to compose has come from contact with a popular pre-occupation of the moment, with a novel exploitation of existing material by some other composer, or with the possibilities of writing to a set purpose, commercial or otherwise; works such as *Ragtime* and *Piano Rag Music* are drawn from the first of these sources,

Pulcinella, conceived after the Scarlatti-Tommasini ballet *The Good-humoured Ladies*, from the second, and the various commissioned ballets, concertos, etc., from the third. Moreover the attitude behind this continual swinging from style to style is the more vulnerable for being prompted to an overwhelming degree by exclusively musical stimuli. His music so often owes its existence in some way to other music; it has lost direct contact with life and reality, and frequently fails to convince after the brilliant polish and seductive glamour of the surface have worn off. 'I begin with technique and end with inspiration', he said *à propos* of *The Rake's Progress*: the doctrine of craft for craft's sake.

Although we may come to have little confidence in what Stravinsky himself considers the real problems of musical expression, there do exist such problems, and they have to be faced. The artist's actual practice is always a more faithful guide to the nature of his real sensibility and the workings of his creative faculties than is his theorizing. This is particularly true of the composer; nowhere in matters of aesthetics is there more *naïve* speculation, irrelevant or meaningless observation, and good honest nonsense than in the general run of sayings and writings by musicians about music.

Stravinsky's works are an all too evident reflection of the predicament in which the modern composer finds himself, and from the outward forms that the malady takes may be diagnosed the shape and causes of the malady itself. Seen from this angle his music assumes a contemporary significance which exceeds the personal and partakes to a large extent of the typical. To judge from his own expressed opinions, this state of affairs was undoubtedly not willed by Stravinsky himself; it represents in the first instance the pressure of trends and ideas which have involuntarily made themselves felt in his thought, but he would resent the suggestion that he is simply to be treated as a microcosm of the musical events of the last forty or so years. Yet it is a position from which he cannot escape; one might even go so far as to say that it is in this that his real value and interest lie. To consider an artist as completely immersed in the tides and currents of his day is, no doubt, tantamount to admitting that he falls short of that greatness which, though it speaks with the accent and manners of its age, yet conveys a meaning and a sense of beauty that are above the limits of space and time. 'The great poet', writes T. S. Eliot in his essay *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca*, 'in writing himself, writes his time.' But it is an undesigned process; it happens with the poet's hardly knowing it. And the writer who does little more than write his time can lay but modest claim to be called great.

It is important not to overlook the fact that the diversities of style and purpose in Stravinsky's music, both in their purely personal and

in their wider contemporary contexts, always remain genuine chosen media of self-expression and are not to be taken as parodies, *pièces d'occasion* or *tours de force*. The invocation of the musical spirit of an earlier age is the particular product of the First World War and the years that followed, when loss of self-reliance made the artist look desperately about him for something with which to steady the rolling and tossing of his troubled mind. We were asked in the 1920s to admire a composer's music because it was in the style and tradition of some earlier composer, which is as frank an admission of spiritual sterility as could be made. The musician's obsequious and almost relieved immolation of his artistic soul on the altar of the 'old masters', whose pity could only have been equalled by their mystification, was upheld as the way of salvation, and faithful disciples have filed in ragged order past the shrine, proclaiming their vicarious catharsis. Musical judgment by this criterion is now an historical phenomenon which we need not gloat over; but Stravinsky still bears witness to it as a creative impulse in which he, for one, continues to put his trust.

To quote in this context the aphorism 'Tornate all'antico: sarà un progresso' is to give a grotesque misrepresentation of Verdi and to fail in the distinction of values. Verdi, a composer whose roots were deeply embedded in his native soil, carried with him, in common with all great artists, an involuntary awareness of tradition and of his own place in it. The absence of this awareness means isolation, disillusionment, and eventual artistic starvation. So far from being a recommendation to a pious, unquestioning imitation of the past, an assumption of the role of *laudator temporis acti*, Verdi's attitude embodies a concept of unbroken linear development in which the artist feels his historic moment as a point in a creative continuity. Nothing can show better in practice what Verdi meant than *Falstaff*; on the one hand new dramatic ends are being realized by a continuous texture of composition, while the work as a whole takes its place in the spiritual tradition inherited from such early masterpieces as Monteverdi's *Incoronazione di Poppea*. Although to break with the past and become a musical cosmopolitan, as Stravinsky has done, may appear to offer desirable emancipation and a tempting solution of one's artistic troubles, an outsider cannot force an entry into any national tradition that he chooses, or, for that matter, into a tradition of any kind. A musical cosmopolitan very soon becomes a musical exile, denied access to all but the outer courts of each spiritual temple at which he seeks consolation for the past and a new faith for the future.

There are interesting points of contact between Stravinsky and his surrealist contemporaries in the field of literature and, more particularly, of painting. Surrealist painting relies in its methods on the

dreamlike effect produced by the incongruous juxtaposition of elements. It therefore stands to reason that each individual element must be immediately and completely recognizable for what it is in itself, and not for what it might symbolize; in other words, its technique is at bottom that of more or less academic realism. Now although self-contained realistic representation of a purely pictorial order is beyond the faculty of music—apart from traditional common-places such as cuckoo calls on woodwind and military calls on brass—it is nevertheless possible for a composer, by providing recognizable styles and formulae, to produce firmly delineated impressions and images in the mind of the listener, which are the virtual equivalents of realistically painted objects; and by the incongruous association of such mutually contradictory styles and formulae he arrives at the musical correspondent of surrealist painting. Ballet afforded an ideal medium for the presentation of surrealist incongruity, and Diaghilev, that adroit exponent of commercial surrealism, was not slow to call on painters such as Chirico and Picasso (the Picasso, that is, of the First World War), and musicians such as Satie, Poulenc and Stravinsky, who would be suitable assistants in the exploitation of the new ideas; and behind Diaghilev's early ballets in this mood lurks the unmistakable influence of Jean Cocteau, who, understandably if ironically, is still to be found in the company of Stravinsky in *Oedipus Rex*.

The step that Stravinsky subsequently made from surrealism to neo-classicism is thus a very short one; from calculated episodic incongruities, like the sardonic, distorted chorales in *L'Histoire du Soldat*, he can turn to the world of the chorale itself, seen through the sophisticated eyes of an artist in the *avant-garde* of twentieth-century fashion. The necessity for making immediately obvious the identity of his antecedents is felt even more keenly, since now not merely certain parts but the whole work is to depend on it.

An illuminating study may be made on the basis of the chameleonic *volte-faces* of Stravinsky's career into the nature of the relationship between individual elements and styles in a work and the particular contemporary needs that they are called upon to satisfy. Such a need, whether it has come to be felt in consequence of a period of inner fermentation or whether it has imposed itself from without, is a transient sensation, shortly to be challenged by another need to which, fulfilled or only avoided, it must sooner or later yield. The years leading up to the First World War were years of strenuous, almost hectic, musical experiment. By 1914 a degree of complication had been reached which, with a few highly esoteric exceptions, has not been surpassed; *Le Sacre du Printemps*, with its unilateral exploitation of rhythm and its lavishness of scoring, takes its place in this period. The realization that there was really nothing more to be achieved

in this direction brought about a clear break with such gargantuan forces and a preoccupation with the intense development of the particular. The descriptive, pictorial element in music retreated; the range of action and the scale of execution were reduced; anxious gazes probed the personal store of inner resources in search of material — everything involved, in fact, in the exchange of the world of *Le Sacre du Printemps* for that of *L'Histoire du Soldat* and *Les Noces*.

The new turn, like most of Stravinsky's changes of direction, was made in the grand manner; from the Brobdingnagian proportions of *Le Sacre du Printemps* we are pitched into a Lilliputian world of pieces scored for a mere handful of instruments. Words like 'moderation' and 'compromise' are not part of Stravinsky's vocabulary; for the spectacular sinner there is only the way of spectacular conversion.

These two works, *L'Histoire du Soldat* and *Les Noces*, are probably the most original that Stravinsky has written, and their total effectiveness, in spite of a minimal musical interest, is undeniable. Yet the spiritual poverty of the music *qua* music, its shortwindedness and its lack of spontaneity, bear sad witness to the barrenness of Stravinsky's art when he sets out from a point which is honestly within himself and builds up his work with elements derived from personal ideas or experiences, not those of past composers. The final ironical comment on all this is really Stravinsky's own — he moved hastily on to firm ground hallowed by the serene memory of the eighteenth century.

There is little to be gained from enlarging on the significance of Stravinsky's selection of a specific early style for a specific work; the correspondence represents at bottom nothing more than either the expression of what is felt, consciously or intuitively, to supply the musical element whose presence is most vitally missed at the moment, or the deliberate choice of the idiom best suited to the requirements of the task in hand. In the pseudo-classical concertos, and in *The Rake's Progress*, for instance, he makes good the melodic and formal deficiencies of the age by supplying synthetic Bach-like formulae and assorted eighteenth-century structural principles; a calculated essay in religiosity like the *Symphony of Psalms*, on the other hand, moves in an incense-laden atmosphere produced by blending suitable ingredients from the worlds of Gregorian chant, Handelian oratorio and Hymns Ancient and Modern, with flavourings from home-grown spices.

The consideration raised earlier about the relationship in Stravinsky between the external pressure of events and the inner compulsion of his artistic being has really received its answer in the course of the foregoing discussion. Since *Le Sacre du Printemps* in particular he

has been essentially the recipient of impacts and impressions rather than the initiator of ideas; like many of the heroes in the novels of Thomas Mann — Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain*, Adrian Leverkühn in *Doctor Faustus* — he is a person to whom things happen, not a person by whom things are brought about. He has progressed by a series of reactions, each of which has generally been greeted confidently by the composer himself and hailed messianically by his followers; and *The Rake's Progress* offers substantially the same solution to the problems of the twentieth century composer that was contained twenty years earlier in *Pulcinella* and the works that followed it.

Stravinsky's artistic methods contribute nothing to the resolution of the apparently irreconcilable dualism of the 'objective' world of external reality and the 'subjective' visionary world of the artist's mind, the dichotomy which has persistently beset so much of the writing on aesthetics in the last fifty years or more. It is, of course, true that he is as much as anyone else a victim of the disintegration of values in the contemporary world, but he does not appear to see it in its real incisive significance and cannot therefore respond to the penetrating demands that it makes on the faculties of the imaginative mind and the integrity of the artistic conscience. There is nothing to suggest the alignment of his music with the notion of the depersonalization of the artist found in T. S. Eliot's essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* and elsewhere; the surrender of the power of self-generated and self-bound emotions and experiences, which is at the centre of this conception, is made in obedience to the commands of a truth beyond appearances, but few people would be disposed to maintain that the commands to which Stravinsky has responded are of this transcendental order.

His peculiar form of escapism in the face of modern predicaments has the indirect but involuntary effect of illuminating the greatness of those of his contemporaries who have winced at the prospects but not retreated from them, and have struggled through to a genuine, if limited, personal salvation. The *Odyssey* of Bela Bartók, one of the few really great twentieth century composers, is a revealing study in the pain-racked efforts of a steeled and relentless mind towards the ultimate achievement of aesthetic liberation and spiritual autonomy in the purity of the last string quartets and the other works of those and later years. The distance between his world and that of Stravinsky can be measured in terms of the distance between, for example, the manufactured pastiche chorales of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* and the grave nobility of the chorale in the second movement of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*; or between the 'Bach-like' writing in Stravinsky's concertos and the re-lived spirit of Bach in the first movement of Bartók's *Music for Strings*,

Celeste and Percussion. Bartok's only comparable spiritual companion is probably Alban Berg.

Of a similar uncompromising nature was the lonely figure of Gustav Holst, who fought to reconcile, by self-dedication to the forces of concentrated intellection, the proud insular traditions of his own country with the wider and more readily assimilated appeal of the general European heritage. And I have a feeling that the name of Bernard van Dieren also belongs here — though there will be no general opportunity to appreciate his stature as long as his music, apart from a handful of songs and piano pieces, remains unperformed.

Along the road that leads to this rare state of grace are to be found other composers who have not shrunk from facing the whole question of artistic and moral integrity; some, like William Walton and Edmund Rubbra, have come a certain distance only to find that they can move no further; others, like Constant Lambert and Michael Tippett, could only summon up one or two tentative steps. Yet there is more that really matters, more that is really vital in these nervous spasms of activity, than in the voluminous outputs of the many composers who have chosen to ignore — or are perhaps not even aware of — the true nature of the spiritual situation in which they live.

Stravinsky's neo-classical works, and his expressed opinions concerning the adoption of that particular attitude towards musical composition, have an ironical indirect effect. T. S. Eliot has pointed out that, although the existing monuments of art form an ideal order among themselves which is complete before a new work arrives, the supervention of novelty compels a readjustment, however slight, of the entire existing order, as the relationships of the individual works to each other undergo a modification forced by their relationship to the new work — an historical statement which takes its place in Mr Eliot's conception of the nature of Time. Consequently the assessment of the value and quality of a work of art may vary from one period to another, in the way, for instance, that the nineteenth century, with a touching faith in artistic as well as material progress, considered the symphonies of Beethoven automatically superior to those of Mozart.

The irony of the situation as far as Stravinsky is concerned becomes apparent if one takes the composer at his word when he says that his concertos are in the spirit of Bach and Mozart, and refers them to their esteemed forbears. The result, after the initial incredulousness has worn off, can only be to make one even more aware of the incomparable greatness of the old masters and to throw into painfully sharp relief the pathetic spectacle of an effort to claim artistic redemption on the strength of the merits of one's chosen

saints. Their virtues, abstracted and distilled into an essence which can be stored until required, and then brought out, suitably diluted, to form the base of some new product, are to be the criteria by which a new work justifies its existence.

Formal excellences are meaningless without the breath of an original vitality to vivify them. Clifford Bax, in his autobiographical *Inland Far*, draws a comparison which, though in different terms, is an appropriate comment on Stravinsky's position: 'The man who prefers *Martin Chuzzlewit* to *Phèdre*', he writes, 'has but chosen between formless vitality and unvitalized form'—Dickens as representative of English art, Racine of that of the Latin peoples. Although some may wish to challenge an equation of *Phèdre* with Stravinsky's concertos, *Apollo Musagetes*, or other similar works, in terms of artistic value, the parallel serves to indicate the shortcomings inherent in raising, for whatever reason, formal considerations above all others, instead of allowing the form to receive its life from the spirit and content of the work. It is from such preconceived notions that Stravinsky derives his specific praise of *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata* at the expense of *Otello* and *Falstaff*.

The pattern of evasive action and reaction which is Stravinsky's career may be traced in the works of many a twentieth century composer who has faltered in the face of the real, unnerving situation and taken refuge in irrelevant intellectual facility. One has only to think of Prokofiev, who passed from the *Scythian Suite* to the *Classical Symphony* in the very same way and at the very same time as Stravinsky passed from *Le Sacre du Printemps* to *Pulcinella*, though perhaps not with the same intention; or of Poulenc, who still flits to and fro from Handel to Haydn, from Schubert to Erik Satie, with a *demi-monde* artlessness and an anxious innocence which never quite deceive; for these, as for many others, the acceptance of the legacy of doubts and confusions to which the modern age is heir has been too harsh a demand.

It seems reasonable to assume that future ages will see in Stravinsky as a whole, as we today can see in the Stravinsky of the 1910s and 1920s in particular, the prototype of a certain attitude towards music in the twentieth century, a figure whose personal achievement is of secondary importance but whose representative significance will convey a great deal to those searching for the ethos of the twentieth century or following the peculiar plight of music as an expression of that ethos. As the late Cecil Gray said: 'If one might be permitted to adapt a famous epigram, it could be said that if he had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him.' Stravinsky's most genuine, most spontaneous music may well emerge as that written in his early unspoiled romantic years before the First World War, the style best known from *L'Oiseau de Feu* and *Petrou-*

shka. His real personal inheritance was the national Romanticism of the great Russian composers of the late nineteenth century; an inheritance eagerly accepted by many of his compatriots but rejected by him as depreciated in value and in any case no longer fashionable. Unfortunately the musical consequences do not help to allay our misgivings about the wisdom and the validity of his verdict.

BOOK REVIEWS

AUSTIN DUNCAN-JONES: *Butler's Moral Philosophy*. Penguin Books, 2s. 6d. net.

This is the third volume to appear in the new *Pelican Philosophy Series* edited by A. J. Ayer. It comprises a chapter on Butler's life and writings, six chapters of exposition and criticism, and a final chapter on 'Some ultimate problems of ethics'. The book is frankly philosophical in its interest and has little to say on 'moral problems' in the ordinary sense of the phrase, little to say on Butler's own characteristic ethical views — for example his glowing opinion of the man who does a good turn for himself. The aim has been to clarify, and certainly the author has been successful. This is a book which will prove rewarding to the philosopher, to the student who is beginning moral philosophy and to the other readers of Penguin books. It is written in an admirable compact satisfying style, not unworthy of the philosopher to whom it is dedicated: and indeed one has the impression that the author has been influenced by his subject in more ways than one.

There are, it seems to me, three important things achieved. First, we have a presentation of Butler's moral philosophy as a single connected whole. The Fifteen Sermons are an expression of a remarkably well thought-out system of ethical beliefs: each sermon is in itself perfect in order and economy: and there are sequences of sermons (e.g. the celebrated first three) which lead us on from principle to principle. But the collection invites analysis and summary: and this is the first thing that has been achieved in Duncan-Jones's book. Secondly, he has attempted to criticize these doctrines from the point of view of one who knows very well what is happening in philosophy in our own day. Thirdly, the author gathers up his own comments and questions into a final chapter in which the nature of moral judgment is discussed independently, along with some of the questions about ethics that are most important at the present time.

In his last chapter, the author approaches a definition of a moral judgment by the following stages: (1) A moral judgment is the expression of an attitude to an action of a certain kind; an attitude *pro* or *con*, whether strong or weak. (2) This attitude is indifferent in respect of the persons concerned in the action, the time and place, etc., but not as to the circumstances. (3) The person making the judgment maintains the same attitude *pro* or *con* to his own actions, even when this goes against his own interest. He may, of course, tell lies while condemning lying, but he must not do so with entire serenity. So far nothing has been said as to whether, in making a moral judgment, we are stating a *belief*: the definition is compatible with an attitude-theory of morals or with an intuitionist theory. And Duncan-Jones makes the suggestion that this *neutral* definition of a moral judgment could profitably be used by both schools of thought for the discussion of the further characteristics of moral judgments.

Butler, of course, held that a moral judgment includes this element of *knowing*; and by no means rejected those 'eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things' which Samuel Clarke had taken as the *a priori* foundation of a moral system. But then Butler never seriously doubted that the consciences of good men everywhere would always approve or disapprove of the same actions. Duncan-Jones seizes on this as a fundamental point of difference between Butler and the Penguin reader of today. For now we all of us recognize the diversity of moral judgments and traditions; and most of us have some theory of the evolution or development of moralities. This does not make it impossible to hold that objective duty is everywhere and at all times the same: but if we hold this, it becomes difficult to decide which of all the rival views is the *correct* one. Revelation may offer the key, but it has difficulties: so has Evolution, so has the Happiness Principle.

Many philosophers (especially amongst the author's contemporaries and associates) have fallen back upon Hume: upon the view that a moral judgment is only the expression of an attitude; that to those who feel that lying is wrong there can be no independent assurance that this feeling is correct. Duncan-Jones is not as definite on this question as one might have hoped. The argument is straddled with hypotheticals: 'If we reject the attitude theory we must...'; 'For people of a moralizing bent it is difficult to resist the assumption...'; 'If we are willing to pursue this train of thought...' He has argued already in an earlier chapter that the attitude theory is more *economical* than Butler's, but that this is not a decisive reason for preferring it. He now (if I interpret him correctly) finds that after all some feelings really are *appropriate* to their objects in a way which the attitude theory cannot explain. He is therefore prepared to consider the possibility that sometimes we approve of actions which in fact possess the peculiar property of rightness. Is it because we are able to perceive or otherwise cognize this property? The author maintains a nice balance: he criticizes sharply those philosophers who assume that a moral judgment is nothing but the apprehension of a peculiar sort of truth. It can (he thinks) be proved that a moral judgment is the expression of a moral attitude: it cannot be proved that it is anything more. However it may be something more: and if so we have to consider two connected aspects of a moral judgment. (1) The cognition of a moral quality, rightness or wrongness, in the situation; (2) the feeling of approval towards the right and of disapproval towards the wrong. It is (on this view) a fact that men approve what they believe to be right, disapprove what they believe to be wrong. But we are unwilling to regard it as a mere brute fact: the attitude of approval is here appropriate and the attitude of disapproval would be inappropriate. The recognition of rightness not only gives us a reason for favouring or furthering the action, it gives us a 'prepotent reason'. Is there then some *a priori* moral principle which connects the quality of rightness with the feeling of approval? On this view there must be. 'There is a distinctive relation of fittingness, or "intrinsic stringency", between moral qualities and conduct, in virtue of which actions and moral judgments may conform or fail to conform to moral truths. The nature of this relation may be felt but cannot be analysed.'

This is perhaps not the conclusion some would have expected from the founder of the journal *Analysis*: and I hesitate to say that he commits himself to it. But whether the reader comes to accept this conclusion or not, he will have found the argument that points somewhat uncertainly to it, and the other important discussions in the book, of very great profit.

KARL BRITTON

ARMIN MOHLER: *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932, Grundriss ihrer Weltanschauungen*. Friedrich Vorwerk, Stuttgart.

Compared with the English, the Germans tend to be introspective theorists: when faced with a difficult situation they are generally not satisfied with merely finding and applying the practical means for its solution, but also tend to seek an abstract explanation for the presence of the original difficulties and an abstract justification of the course of action adopted. For instance, in the decades preceding 1870 they not only longed for the unity which would give them the military power and political influence appropriate to the size of their nation, but wanted this unity to be achieved in a 'Reich' which would 'revive' the glories of the Holy Roman Empire. When a degree of unity was achieved in 1870-71 there was, of course, much gratification at the material improvement, but there soon also arose criticism of this second empire for offering a solution only in the field of practical politics and economics.

The critics increased in both influence and numbers throughout the existence of the Hohenzollern empire. It is therefore not surprising that when the Weimar Republic was established it found a two-fold violent opposition facing it from the right: on one side stood the old-fashioned patriots who could not forget their dynastic loyalties; on the other — and this opposition was by far the more dangerous of the two — stood those nationalists who felt no sentimental regret for the Hohenzollern empire but who criticized the new régime for failing to eradicate the principal faults of the old one. It is among these critics — they might be called 'modern' or 'dynamic' nationalists — that the protagonists of the 'conservative revolution' are to be found: men who were nationalists without being reactionaries, and critics of the *bourgeois* capitalist Weimar republic without being Marxists.

By opposing the republican régime, by undermining its prestige in the eyes of the people, by supplying theories, ideas, symbols — e.g., the swastika, or the expression *III Reich* made popular by Moeller van den Bruck — these men smoothed the path for the Nazis. Nevertheless they were not the cause of National-Socialism, nor were they wholly responsible for its triumph. Some degree of paternal responsibility must be recognized, but spiritual ancestors are after all not responsible for all the sins of their descendants. Many of them, it is true, enthusiastically welcomed the triumph of National-Socialism, but in very many cases this enthusiasm did not last. The less far-sighted and the more unscrupulous among them made a career under the Nazis, but many others joined the silent opposition — the lucky ones escaping assassination after June 30th, 1934, and after July 20th, 1944 (Edgar Jung, one of their outstanding theorists, was only one of those who were murdered in 1934).

Anyone who has studied German political life between the wars knows how extensive the nationalist opposition to the Republic was. Before an attempt can be made to explore the resulting jungle of ideas, a few roads must first be systematically cleared. This is what the young Swiss scholar, Armin Mohler, has attempted to do. His intimate knowledge of Germany (where he now lives), his great patience and his erudition have enabled him to make a success of the attempt.

As might be expected, his book does not make easy reading. It shows much of the thoroughness which one has learnt to associate with German scholarship. And without such thoroughness the primary job of systematization could not have been done. It may be remarked also that the book is not long: it contains only some 210 pages of text, the rest being taken up by an extremely valuable bibliography, the first part classifying books by subject-matter, the second by authors. So thorough and so systematic are both the text and the bibliography that it would be difficult to imagine any serious student of Germany since 1918 disregarding Mohler's book, be it only as a book of reference. Some idea of the vastness and complexity of the subject will be obtained if one realizes that it takes Mohler the entire book merely to define his subject and that the bibliography (which only gives samples) contains 617 items while the index of names covers 10 pages. He succeeds in handling this material only by careful analysis and by circumscribing his terms of reference; he limits himself mostly to the study of political thought and to the period between 1918 and 1932.

It would be of little value to give here a selection of names or of ideas; we must limit ourselves to generalities. Mohler finds that all the men he studies are agreed on one point: they all believe that we live in an 'interregnum' where there is no sense of permanence and no stability of philosophy, ethics and social organization. In one way or another they all stem from Nietzsche who was the first to give unambiguous expression to this idea. His influence expresses itself in 'cyclic' as opposed to 'linear' thought, i.e. in the belief that humanity is not moving towards a final goal — the belief of Christianity, of socialism and of most

philosophies based on the idea of progress. The men of the 'conservative revolution' believe in the 'recurrence' of situations; they join Nietzsche in his battle against Hegel, against Christianity, against the ideas of the French revolution and against most ideas current in the nineteenth century. There can be no utopia, but only a more efficient, a more 'natural' way of taking advantage of a given situation (the nation being always considered by these men as the natural subdivision of mankind). This 'realistic' attitude allowed many of them to flirt with Soviet Russia (Rapallo) and to envisage socialistic reforms which no old-fashioned nationalist would have countenanced. In the mass of ideas Mohler traces five main strands which are best called by their German names; they are: *völkisch*, *jung-konservativ*, *national-revolutionär*, *bündische Jugend*, *Landvolkbewegung*. Each of these is carefully delimited and characterized.

But this is not just another scholarly book which deals with problems interesting to the scholar only; far from it: many of the men dealt with are still alive today, and many of the young men of today have consciously or unconsciously absorbed some of their ideas. 'In the second post-war period', writes the author, 'the recipes of the nineteenth century have once again shown themselves ineffective and have done so even sooner than the first time. Everything again points to solutions which are not covered by the bankrupt slogans of progress and reaction. It would seem that the "conservative revolution" offers such solutions...' In other words, it may have been unrealistic to try and convert the Germans to Western forms of democracy and shortsighted to call 'fascists' all those whose slogans and ideas were later repeated by the Nazis.

NICOLAS SOLLOHUB

D. R. MARSH: *Corporate Trustees*. Europa Publications, 25s. net.

It is only within lives still in being that the British public has become accustomed to seeing companies solicit appointment as executors or trustees for reward. The corporate trustee is still something of a novelty, and it has inspired Mr Marsh to write a book which is distinctly novel. Its object is deceptively simple: he sets out to tell us all about corporate trustees, and consequently ranges far and wide over economic and legal history, law, finance, sociology, business organization, costing, and much else besides. All these matters are normally in the hands of specialists whose relations with one another are polite but distant. Some American law schools would welcome this book in the name of 'functional approach', but Mr Marsh oversteps even that elastic formula as he pursues his method which is, in a certain sense, historical. When dealing with the distant past, the historian habitually takes this broad view of his subject and does not confine himself, say, to the Digest if he writes of slavery in the ancient world, or to the law of real property if he treats of feudalism. It is much rarer for a modern institution to receive such broad treatment.

For ages professional men have been producing the necessary tools of their professional literature and quite properly their books tend to be hieratic; but the trust officer cannot be at once solicitor, accountant, surveyor, banker, broker and the rest. From the standpoint of those professions he is a 'lay client', but one who has made a profession of dealing with professional men. His qualification for acting consists in his being an 'informed' person, and it is to such a public that he has addressed his book.

After an excellent preliminary sketch of the history of trusts and corporations, the author introduces us to the venerable South Sea Company which unsuccessfully sought powers to set up a subsidiary Trust Company (and itself died in the process) in 1854. The South Sea Company was not a name of good augury for a novel type of business, and it was still more ominous that the movement for establishing a Public Trustee should be led by an ex-Director of Criminal Investi-

gations of the Metropolitan Police who argued tellingly from his experience of fraudulent solicitors, thereby confirming the Law Society in its steady opposition to trustee companies. In fact, the future was to lie, not with the *ad hoc* executor-trustee company, but with the banking and insurance companies. From time to time such companies, as creditors of insolvent estates, had been compelled to take out letters of administration. The modern business, however, derives from the Royal Exchange Assurance which by private act took the necessary powers in 1901, followed by a bank in 1904 and the Public Trustee in 1906.

From then onwards there was enough business, and enough companies engaged in it, to work out from experience the basic principles of a new type of enterprise. On all this, Mr Marsh gives much rich and interesting material, distributed among chapters each devoted to some aspect of trustee work. Advertising is singularly discreet; scales of fees vary considerably, and a thorough costing of the service seems impracticable (the author's conjecture is that the profits, if any, are small); relations with other professions, especially solicitors, brokers and accountants are settling down to the satisfaction of those concerned; the leisurely plundering of estates by the tax-gatherer has to be watched; the possible conflicts of interest and duty are one of the most ancient problems of trusteeship, and the intensely personal matter of contacts with lay clients is little changed by the substitution of a corporation for an individual, for even a company has to conduct its affairs through the agency of its very human officers.

The 'friendly corporation' (as Mr Marsh called it in this Journal not so long ago) is here presented as a whole in all its aspects, as a living institution by one who has long been engaged in the business, and the result is a remarkably interesting book. It is good to learn that the discernment of the Houblon-Norman trustees made it possible.

T. F. T. PLUCKNETT

HERBERT DINGLE: *The Scientific Adventure: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science.* Pitman, 30s. net.

Since its reopening after the end of the war, the Department of the History and Philosophy of Science at University College, London, has flourished exceedingly under the leadership of Professor Dingle. The present volume, however, though it opens with his inaugural lecture delivered in 1947, is not founded upon this teaching experience. It consists of a selection of essays and addresses on scattered topics written mainly during the last ten years and printed in various journals. Part One is historical, Part Two philosophical.

Professor Dingle does not claim to be a historian ('my knowledge of the facts contained in the essays forming the first part of the book is entirely secondhand'), but despite the modesty of the author's preface his contributions to the history of science are always illuminating and incisive. History is the interpretation of facts, as well as their statement. Naturally most of the historical essays are concerned with the history of astronomy, and among them two well-phrased and deeply considered appraisals stand out. These are the essays on Copernicus and Galileo. The former is excellently balanced where eulogy has too often been wholly uncritical; the second develops Professor Dingle's case that Galileo was the true founder of modern scientific method. On this it might be remarked that the evolution of method in the non-physical sciences seems to require a rather different history.

The essays on the philosophy of science are much sterner matter, again presented with an admirable lucidity of thought and language. In the two last ('Science and Ethics', 'Science and Religion') the frontier of scientific detachment is precisely traced. The others, amidst their variety of topic, have a common theme: the necessity for the re-orientation of the scientist's thinking about his

scientific activity, especially to conform with the implications of relativity theory. Professor Dingle argues that the ultimate synthesis of the sciences into a single body of knowledge by the resolution of their apparent inconsistencies and paradoxes can only be achieved by fresh conceptualization. Problems do not reside in any as yet unknown or unknowable reality, but in the inadequacy of the pattern imposed upon the findings of experience which is not yet subtle enough to allow consistent statements to be made. In this section also the lectures on 'Rational and Empirical Elements in Physics' and 'The Laws of Nature' are specially notable for the penetration of their analysis and the meticulous dissection of foggy or irrelevant ratiocination for which their author is celebrated.

A. R. HALL

Documents Diplomatiques Française (1871-1914), 1st Series, Vol. XII. Paris, Costes.

After the first world war, the example of Soviet Russia led most European governments to publish extensive selections of diplomatic documents of the years before 1914. The French series was perhaps the best edited and most informative; but it was late in starting, and was still incomplete in 1939. German depredations and post-war difficulties delayed its resumption, but now the remaining volumes are gradually appearing, hardly noticed among the topical publications for the inter-war years.

The latest volume, No. XII in the first series, covers the period from May 8th, 1895, till October 14th, 1896. It shows French diplomacy, which had once called the tune for Europe, struggling to preserve freedom of action in a Europe increasingly dominated by Germany. The Russian alliance was now complete; but it had been accepted reluctantly by the Russian Foreign Office, and its implementation was by no means certain. Montebello, the French Ambassador at St Petersburg, was rather optimistic in affirming that 'Russia needs us at least as much as we need her' (Nos. 43, 302). In 1894 Germany had begun to re-establish her old links with the Russian court. Nicholas II had a choice of friends; France, so long as the Egyptian question estranged her from Britain, did not. Admittedly, the Russians did not want to lose the French alliance — that might have meant dependence on Germany — but they would not forego the benefits of German friendship in deference to French sentiment. It was to meet Russian wishes that France sent warships to the opening of the Kiel Canal in June 1895; 'we have been dragged unwillingly where we did not wish to go', wrote the French foreign minister Hanotaux in a disillusioned moment (32). More important, in April 1895 France had joined Germany and Russia in 'advising' Japan not to annex the Liao-tong peninsula — a happy omen for Germany. Russia's increasing diversion eastwards meant that she needed German benevolence in Europe, and the Dual Alliance was sublimated by co-operation against Britain in Asia. From here, it would have been only one stage to that continental league against Britain which was beginning to be advocated by the German Foreign Office.

This combination might have attracted more Frenchmen than anglophobe colonialists. Courcel, the distinguished Ambassador to London, told his German colleague in July 1896:

The divisions between our European peoples will one day seem the result of a deplorable vertigo, a step towards suicide, when we realize the danger of annihilation threatening us from the formidable groups which have emerged at our side and are dividing the human race: the British empire with its vast dependencies, and the two giant powers which alone it fears as future rivals — Russia on one hand, the United States on the other . . . When France and

Germany perceive more clearly the peril of their local feud, will they not be more ready to settle that unhappy dispute? (435).

This is almost pure Strasbourg; but the ideas of Strasbourg could not take root in France while the city remained in German hands. Courcel was not advocating, but rejecting co-operation with Germany, so long as she dreamed of a Europe 'like that of the Hohenstauffen, where the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was surrounded only by satellites, or secondary states'. Most French politicians regarded Alsace-Lorraine as an insuperable barrier to any far-reaching partnership with Germany, not because they seriously contemplated a war of revenge, but because they feared the reaction of French national opinion. Effective German support against Britain might have tempted some of them to change their minds; loyalty to Russia alone could not do so. When the French Government, after much heart-searching, decided not to promise armed support if Russia attacked Constantinople unless there was prospect of a new settlement in Alsace-Lorraine, this did not mean that they wanted to turn the Turkish troubles into a war of revenge. It reflected their fear that Germany's benevolent neutrality in a Franco-Russian war with Britain would virtually establish that 'new grouping of powers' which had recently been much discussed.

If the German recipe for 'the united states of Europe' was unacceptable, the alternative was to improve relations with Britain. Clemenceau and others had seen this for years; the obstacle of course lay in Egypt. British Ministers, even those who would genuinely have liked to evacuate, always found practical objections to doing so; instead they came to assert British influence throughout the Nile valley. French colonialist sentiment therefore drove successive governments to obstruct the British administration in Egypt in the hope of forcing an international conference. This was not a hopeful approach; neither Russia nor Germany wanted British evacuation (which would have permitted her reconciliation with France), and neither would go beyond supporting French obstructionism. Yet France could only justify to Egyptian nationalists a policy which prevented Egyptian money being spent on developing Egypt if this compelled British evacuation at a fairly early date. The Egyptian foreign minister himself encouraged the French to act more directly by advancing on the Upper Nile.

This was a risky policy, unlikely to succeed, but certain to deepen the Anglo-French cleavage. Some of the ablest French diplomatists, such as Paul Cambon and Courcel, would have preferred to negotiate with Britain — realistically but firmly, giving nothing away. A start was made on minor problems; Courcel found Salisbury unexpectedly amenable on the questions of Siam and the Upper Mekong, and apparently anxious to lessen British dependence on the Triple Alliance by improving relations with France and Russia. This negotiation, begun with Hanotaux at the Quai d'Orsay, was completed in January 1896 under Marcellin Berthelot — the eminent chemist, who had been reluctantly introduced to diplomacy at the age of 68 when Léon Bourgeois was unable to find anyone with previous experience who would join a Radical ministry.

Berthelot was too old, and lacked the time, to obtain a grip on the many complex problems awaiting him. At first his advisers kept him on the course already set; Anglo-French relations continued to improve, and in February Courcel informally broached the Egyptian question (306). But reconciliation between Britain and France would have depreciated the value of their respective friendships with Germany and with Russia. On March 12th Britain decided, as reinsurance with the Triple Alliance, to advance up the Nile to Dongola; the involuntary effect was to jeopardize her relations with France. Cambon, Courcel and others nevertheless wished to take the opportunity to negotiate about the future of Egypt; Berthelot was half-convinced, but could not withstand the pressure of colonialist opinion and the jealous Russian ally. He refused to

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facilitate the expedition financially; but he had nevertheless been too conciliatory for the Russians, and the Cabinet accepted his resignation (to his personal relief). France had again to concentrate on fortifying the Russian alliance. Only by his negotiations with Italy did Hanotaux still assert the independence of French policy; but this was a subsidiary and long-term line of action.

To ensure her monopoly of French friendship, Russia now offered more vigorous support in Egypt; specifically, this meant pressing Britain to implement the Suez Convention of 1888 (355, 361). But for anything more than amicable and probably ineffective inquiries, German co-operation would be necessary; this was the unpalatable logic of an anti-British policy (386, 442). The essential question for the Third Republic was whether the quarrel with Germany or with Britain was more important; Courcel's solution had collapsed. Salisbury's moderated hopes of improving relations were disappointed; 'he seemed to consider us as belonging henceforth to different camps', wrote Courcel on June 12th (405). The dispute at Dongola had poisoned Anglo-French relations at other points; on Madagascar, the Lower Niger, the Tunisian tariff, friendly discussion became much more difficult. On Egypt, it was clearly impossible. Marchand's heroic expedition towards Fashoda, which Berthelot had been persuaded to authorize, became the last hope of the French; his arrival did eventually settle the Anglo-French Egyptian question, though not in the way the French had hoped. Only after the crisis of 1898 had acted as a purgative could Anglo-French relations permanently improve. Till then, and for some time afterwards, the shadow of the continental combination remained as a temptation and a warning to the French.

J. D. HARGREAVES

BOOKS RECEIVED

The inclusion of any book in this list does not preclude its review in a later issue

CARLOS BAKER: Hemingway, the Writer as Artist. *Princeton University Press*, 30s. net.

H. E. BELL: An introduction to the History and Records of the Court of Wards and Libraries. *Cambridge University Press*, 30s. net.

SIR ERNEST BENN: The State the Enemy. *Ernest Benn*, 12s. 6d. net.

C. D. BROAD: Religion, Philosophy and Physical Research. *Routledge*, 25s. net.

ARTHUR BRYANT: Literature and The Historian. *Cambridge University Press*, 3s. net.

RUSSELL BURLINGHAM: Forrest Reid. *Faber & Faber*, 25s. net.

O. G. S. CRAWFORD: Archaeology in the Field. *Phoenix House*, 42s. net.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD: The Era of Good Feelings. *Methuen*, 30s. net.

M. A. DEWOLFE HOWE and G. W. COTTRELL, JR.: The Scholar-Friends. *Oxford University Press*, 25s. net.

DONALD DAVIE: Purity of Diction in English Verse. *Chatto & Windus*, 14s. net.

L. H. G. GREENWOOD: Aspects of Euripidean Tragedy. *Cambridge University Press*, 18s. net.

JOHN HOLLOWAY: The Victorian Sage. *Macmillan*, 18s. net.

DOROTHY HEWLETT: Elizabeth Barrett Browning. *Cassell*, 25s. net.

S. H. HOOKE: Babylonian and Assyrian Religion. *Hutchinson*, 8s. 6d. net.

JOHN NORTHAM: Ibsen's Dramatic Method. *Faber*, 21s. net.